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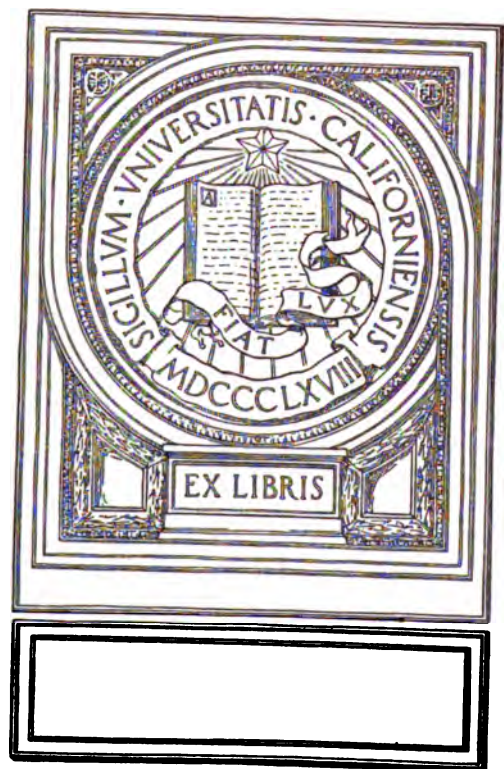
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JAFFA

THE LAST CRUSADE BY DONALD MAXWELL

WITH 100 SKETCHES IN COLOUR, MONOCHROME AND
LINE MADE BY THE AUTHOR IN THE AUTUMN AND
WINTER OF 1918, WHEN SENT ON DUTY TO PALESTINE
BY THE ADMIRALTY FOR THE IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM



UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

LONDON: JOHN LANE, THE BODLEY HEAD
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1743

TO VINDI
ABROGATA

WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED, LONDON AND BECCLES, ENGLAND

TO MY MOTHER

M70528

PREFACE

IT was a year ago to-day that I was transferred by the Admiralty from a patrol on the East Coast to the Department of Naval Intelligence, with instructions to prepare to take up certain duties in Mesopotamia. At the time it seemed a goodly enough prospect, for the days would soon be getting short and drear. The rivers of Eden I felt would be more delectable in January than the rivers of Essex, and palm trees pleasanter to look upon in winter than the monotonous mud flats of Foulness. True, I should be in command of a paint box instead of a patrol boat; but ours "is not to reason why"—*especially when we like the job*—so I packed up and made vast pictorial preparations. Sketch books, chalks, paints and brushes filled a large official-looking black box, and my passage was arranged *viâ* Paris and Italy to Egypt.

It happened, however, that things began to move so fast in Palestine that the attention of the whole world was turned to this zone of the great campaign. The Admiralty thought it wise to keep me under the Egypt command for a time, on my way out to the Persian Gulf, in order to make some records of naval work in progress along the shores of the Holy Land. Now that the glory of Lebanon was to be

a background for mine-sweeping activities, and the coasts of Tyre and Sidon a patrol for destroyers, I should no doubt find many subjects of naval interest suitable for permanent record in the Imperial War Museum.

As things turned out, when I arrived in Egypt hostilities were over, and there was a chance that very little in the way of war subjects would be left in Mesopotamia. Unless I got there pretty quickly I should find everybody packing up. Consequently I had to hurry up with my Palestine pictures and get over the ground as quickly as possible. All my schemes for painting large and dignified canvases of coastal "battle subjects" were knocked on the head, and my tour became a sort of opportunist scramble, of which this book is for the most part an account.

I think any series of the "dignified" pictures that I might have published would have been uncommonly dull because I should have had plenty of time to make them look "historical" and official. As it is, I am practically tearing out pages from sketch books and writing from the notes I made on the spot some account of how they were arrived at.

The fact that I had very little time to think, but simply drew everything I came across was my salvation, for I thus obtained glimpses of things and places from every point of view without rhyme or reason, and in sorting them out afterwards find that I am much better off than I seemed to be at the time.

As I worked upon my diary and explanatory notes I

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found that I was unconsciously piercing together a story, the story of the Last Crusade.

My pictorial notes are the property of the Imperial War Museum, and it is by the courtesy and assistance of the Art Committee of that body that I am able to publish many of them in this book.

THE BEACON,
BORSTAL,
ROCHESTER.

September 17th, 1919.

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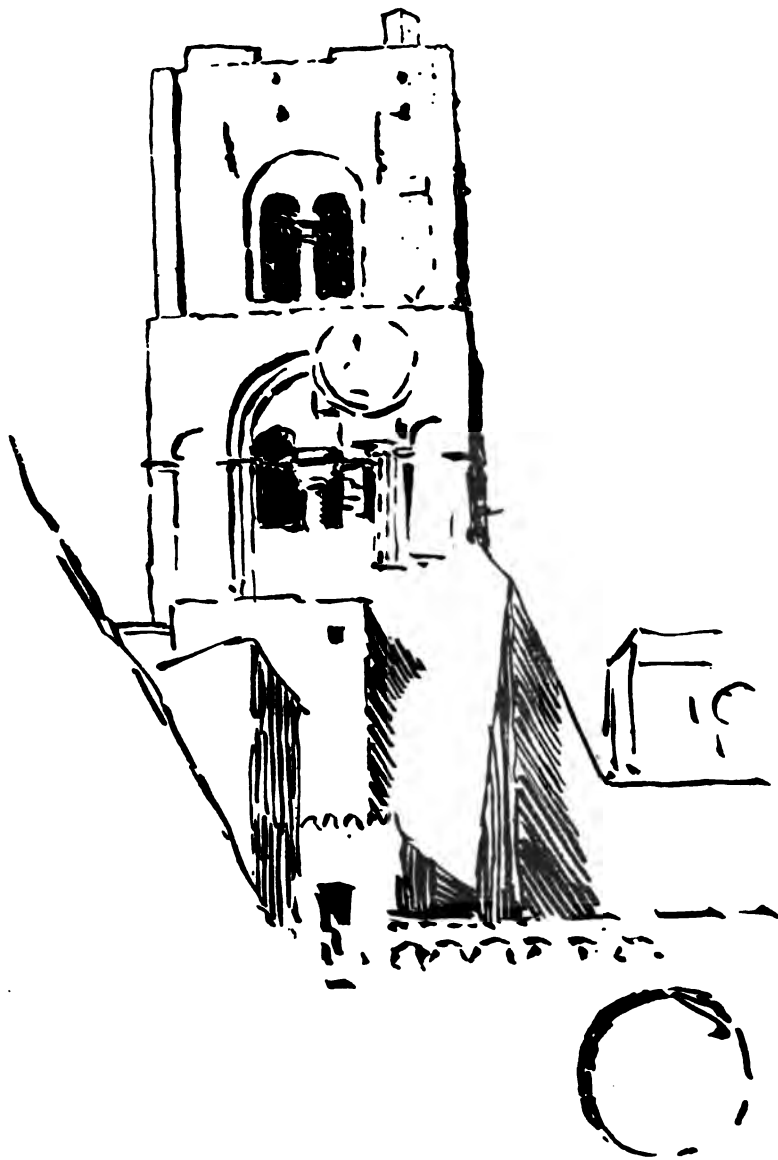
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The Last Crusade



OVER OLD ROADS.



Tower of Cathedral, Taranto.



Stone Village near Taranto.

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I.—OVER OLD ROADS

ON the night of October 25th, 1918, I was travelling by train between Dijon and the Alps, a train that some one either in irony or through unbounded optimism, had called a *rapide*. I was going to Palestine *via* Taranto and Egypt and was incidentally in a very bad humour. The train climbed incessantly and it was still dark. Being half awake and half asleep, in that state of acute physical discomfort caused by trying to spend the night four in a railway carriage, I was dimly aware that I was on the road to Italy and evidently approaching the frontier. A succession of short tunnels and the labouring of the heavy train proclaimed the ascent to Mount Cenis.

I seemed to remember faintly a happier state of things when there were only two of us in the compartment. A lieutenant-commander had occupied the seat opposite. But at a station beyond Dijon two other travellers had compelled us to move up and get into a condition of aching restlessness that caricatured sleep. I was too drowsy to take much notice of the newcomers, beyond the facts that one was a big man and the other a little man and that they talked incessantly on the Armenian question, the big man doing most of the talking.

My knowledge of French being slight, I did not attempt to follow the discussion or rather the lecture, for the little man was merely a listener, interjecting questions or comments, while the stream of eloquence was poured out for his benefit. The rhythmical cadences of speech became a versicle and response. Deep and monotonous the big man's measured periods, lighter, but not unmusical, the little man's interpolations, till the long continuance of this antiphonal chanting lulled me into intermittent sleep.

My face was jammed against the glass of the corner window, a position that was very uncomfortable, but I was too tired to move. From time to time I could see a light flash by. Great bastions of mountain form loomed blacker still against the black curtain of night. Above them, like grey ghosts against the sky, flitted pale shapes of glaciers and snow fields, intangible and having no visible connection with the solid earth. And through it all, like a fine golden thread from rock to rock and from height to height,

sometimes gleaming, sometimes dull, ran the Armenian question. The train crashed through a steep rock-cutting and then rumbled over a viaduct. Far below I could hear the surging of waters. Then we entered a tunnel and I began to wonder how the Armenian question would follow the train. Would it run along with the telegraph wires or go over the top? I gave up the problem and went to sleep again.

I don't know how long I slept, but I know that I was awakened suddenly and thoroughly by a sentence detached from all the rest that seemed to leap out of the monotonous discourse that the big man chanted. I suppose he did not raise his voice at all really. It seemed, however, to me, that he shouted. People who hear their own banns read out in church, invariably accuse the parson of emphasizing theirs above all the rest. And this is what he said,

“ARMENIA LOST HER FREEDOM BY THE CRUSADES.”

The crusades and the crusaders contributed much to the development of western civilization. They left their traces upon art, upon literature, upon the usages of war and upon that consensus of opinion that has become known as international law. They have been held responsible for all sorts of things that they never really affected at all. A man in the train the other day propounded the theory that influenza was brought into Europe from the East by the Knights Templars. He didn't give any evidence of value to back his theory, but not knowing where else it could

come from, made the crusades a sort of historical scapegoat to bear the onus of it. Only yesterday, an enthusiast on cubism—by the way he was fittingly enough employed as a ship's camouflage designer—tried to prove to me that the movement was not a new one, but as old as Byzantine art, and existing in the East a thousand years ago. What a chance he missed, inasmuch as he did not bring it over with the returning crusaders. It might have furnished him with a dignified argument. Will those intellectuals—I will not mention names—who give the weight of their writing to bolster up these art excrescences please note.

And now I had awakened, literally awakened, to the fact that the Armenian question was started by the crusades. The statement seemed on the face of it humorous, but the speaker was evidently in deadly earnest and one who evidently knew his subject.

Both men stopped talking, gazed at me in polite astonishment, for I had sprung to my feet, dishevelled and blinking in the light, as if to refute his assertion. I suppose I was still in the state of one who awakes from a dream and continues to be dominated by its suggestion. I felt extremely foolish, and apologized for my interruption, explaining that I had been dreaming. The trend of their conversation had been interrupted and they talked of the journey, of the probable lateness of the train, of their destination, in fact about anything but the Armenian question. The very intensity of my interest in the subject had apparently stilled it.

I was determined to bring the Armenian question to the fore again, and so enlighten my ignorance concerning the crusades and their influence on the destinies of an enslaved people. I had never heard of Armenia in connection with the wars of the Cross, and failed to see how such a country could have been affected by them at all. For a long time we all three talked on various subjects. The conversation dropped into English, but the lieutenant-commander slept on peacefully.

At last my opportunity came and having led the subject by easy stages to the war news from the East and to the question of the future of Constantinople, I embarked on the subject of the crusades. I reminded the big man, who was an Armenian, that I happened to awake just at the moment when he was talking on Armenia and the crusades and should be much interested and instructed if he would continue the chain of argument which I regretted I had inadvertently broken.

He did so and amazed me with bits of history of which I confess I had been in a large measure ignorant, and which I will here summarize for the benefit of those who may be equally vague as to Armenia's past.

A civilization in advance of most European nations, a Christian people surrounded by Mohammedans, a people whose culture was no new thing introduced by Christianity, but stretching back far into the past, this was the picture that the Turks have defaced. In 100 B.C., Lucullus, the Roman historian, records that when he arrived at Diarbekr,

he found in the theatre Armenian actors presented the plays of Aristophanes in Armenian and he speaks of a high degree of civilization. In the arts both of peace and of war they were a people set apart.

When Mohammedanism swamped surrounding races, they stood firm in the faith, and when all Europe, aroused by Peter the Hermit, determined to wrest the Holy Places from the infidel, Armenia too responded to the call and time and again sent armies to help in the wars of the Cross. Each one of the crusades owed something to Armenian aid. But, alas, as the power of Islam grew and as the force of the crusading expeditions from Europe spent themselves and the crusaders withdrew from Palestine, she alone was left surrounded by people of an alien faith and became an easy prey to the enemies of the Cross. In the eighth crusade her king was captured, and soon afterwards she fell into the clutches of the all-conquering children of the prophet. She had identified herself too thoroughly with the crusaders to be let well alone when isolated, and thus it was a true statement that Armenia lost her freedom by the crusades.

Again a liberator has appeared to free Palestine from the unspeakable Turk. Again Armenia has sent what she could of her man power. Only those Armenians outside the territories of the Turk could muster or those that could escape from their oppressors. A contingent was trained in Cyprus and fought alongside the allies—this time to some purpose and her cruel taskmaster has bitten the dust. The

Armenian stood up and paced up and down the corridor. He was so worked up by his theme, that he could not lecture sitting down. A faint light was breaking in the East outlining the nearer peaks.

"By the crusades Armenia lost her freedom. Go to Armenia, go to any Armenian anywhere in the world, man, woman or child, and you will find a belief, an ineradicable article of faith that the day will come when the Armenian people shall be a nation again. The day will come as surely as the sun behind these hills will rise," and he pointed dramatically across the black chasm of the gorge. "By the crusades Armenia lost her freedom. By a crusade she has found it again, for this war is a Crusade of Crusades and it has overthrown the unspeakable Turk and liberated a subject people."

"IT IS THE LAST CRUSADE."

And so he went on, my eloquent new-found friend, with the grim story of a people, 700,000 of them massacred. He explained what I had never been able to understand before, how it fell out that the best men did not win, how the Turk kept down the Christians by arming all the surrounding Mohammedan tribes and keeping the Christians disarmed, by massacre and oppression, so that no rising had the slightest chance of success and inevitably made an excuse for fresh massacre. He told me, not haltingly, as I am putting it down, but with the easy movement of the pen of

a ready writer, how you may travel up and down the country and look in vain for one good thing that the Turk has done, one trace of art, one piece of architecture, one contribution in any way to science or knowledge. "Wherever the Turk rides," says an old saying, "nothing will grow." It is true, even literally.

The oaks of Bashan and the cedars of Lebanon were famous the world over. The Turk cuts down but never plants. The great irrigation works which made Mesopotamia the granary of the ancient world, were not allowed to decay until the Turk came. Irrigation was still good in the prosperous times of Haroun Alraschid. It was the blight of Turkish rule that descended like a destroying plague and made for misery and slovenliness wheresoever it spread. If a man by private enterprise did something to irrigate his land and improve his crops, the Turk came down on him like a wolf on the fold as a collector of taxes, so that the last state of that man was worse than the first and nobody dared to follow his example.

The Armenian disappeared quite unexpectedly to another part of the train and I did not see him again. I have often wondered since who he was. He held some official position with the Armenian national party and lived in Paris, probably a political exile. His sudden exit from the compartment with the guard—to look after some baggage, I think—left me without means of finding out. I suppose he had not time to come back and alighted at the next station.



DAWN IN THE ALPS

*"What envious streaks
Do lace the severing clouds in yonder east;
Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops."*

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ABSTRACT

By this time a wonderful and mysterious dawn was breaking over the gorge. Of all the majestic subjects that lie to hand for the painter—and for reasons we shall examine, seldom done—I think the first breaking of day over a mountain ravine is one of the most impressive. It is baffling to grasp. It requires poetry and something other than paint to do it. If coloured vapour could be used instead of pigment, and if an effect which lasts for only a few seconds could be sustained, we poor painters might have a chance. Turner has been nearest to the great secret. He has given that infinity of depth and that *vital* quality to vast distance and that revelation of the great and hidden mysteries of nature. By the things that are seen and temporal, he gives us a glimpse of the things which are unseen and eternal.

“Pure spaces clothed in living beams,
Pure lilies of eternal peace,
Whose odours haunt my dreams;
And, stricken by an angel's hand,
This mortal armour that I wear,
This weight and size, this heart and eyes,
Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,
And through the mountain walls,
A rolling organ harmony,
Swells up and shakes and falls,
Then move the trees, the copses nod,
Wings flutter, voices hover clear:
'O just and faithful knight of God,
Ride on! the prize is near.'” *

This quotation recalls others and makes me think that

* Tennyson : Sir Galahad.

perhaps the poets have been nearer than the painters in seizing this mysterious quality. For instance, Shelly depicts

"Dim tracts and vast, robed in the lustrous gloom
Of leaden-coloured even, and fiery hills
Mingling their flames with twilight."

Or Tennyson—

"Ambrosial air
That rollest from the gorgeous gloom
Of evening," *

or take four lines from "Romeo and Juliet." They are indeed the high-water mark of pictorial feeling, and suggest the theory that there is really very little in the choice of medium if true inspiration be there. Put into terms of mediæval metaphysics, the accidents vary, but the substance is the same. In slightly different circumstances, Shakespeare might have painted "The Fighting *Téméraire*," and Turner described the dawn-light over Capulet's garden. The lovers are about to part and Juliet is loath to acknowledge any signs of returning day, when Romeo exclaims :—

"Look, love, what envious streaks
Do lace the severing cloud in yonder east :
Night's candles are burnt out and jocund day
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops."

It was a long and uncomfortable journey to Taranto, where I was under orders to report to H.M.S. *Queen* and find out the arrangements made for getting on to Palestine. I was travelling over old roads and passed through many

* In Memoriam.

places historically associated with the crusades—the plain of Piacenza, where the electrifying eloquence of Peter the Hermit launched the First Crusade, and Brindisi, whence Robert Guiscard set sail with 150 ships and 30,000 men.

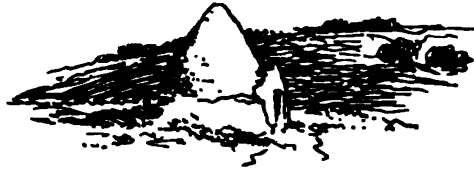


Fig. 1.—Simplest form for stone house: design for bachelor residence.

When I did arrive and report, I found there was no ship to take me on to Port Said for weeks, so according to my marching orders I proceeded to gather together pictorial information for the Admiralty from all sources connected with naval activity.

I found some M.L.'s and went on board, asking for thrilling stories of battles with U-boats for copy. Every one, however, seemed "fed up" with U-boats and urged me to get a car and go out into the country to draw the "Bunny Hutches." It was useless for me to protest that the Admiralty didn't want paintings of Bunny Hutches, and even if the people here had the most palatial arrangements for their rabbits it didn't appeal to me in the least.



Fig. 2.—Enlarged: suitable for a young married couple.

"Yes, but you must paint the Bunny Hutches," they cried. "They are *houses*. People live in them. They are the finest Bunny Hutches in the

world. Go and see the Flag Lieutenant in the *Queen* and see if you can get a car."

So I went. The battleship *Queen* was lying stem-on to a quay and joined to it by a wooden bridge. Alongside her lay the Italian cruiser *Napoli*, and on the other hand were trawlers, drifters and destroyers.

The ward room told me more and more about Bunny Hutches. It appears that they are pyramid-shaped stone cottages that begin quite small and grow like bulbs, more and more "hutches" being added as the family enlarges. Whole villages of them lay to the North which was the great "Bunny Hutch" country. In vain did I try to explain my job and the necessity for my paintings to be more or less naval. I must go without delay and get the local colour. No series of sketches would be complete without a picture of these houses. Think of the disappointment of a naval officer taking his grandchildren to the Imperial War Museum to show them what he did at Taranto in the Great War and not finding any record of the "Bunny Hutches." It was unthinkable.

Then I found the Flag Lieutenant. Apparently I had come at the most appropriate time. Official photographs of various ships in the port were being taken and an attempt was being made to get together records of naval designs in these waters. I should, no doubt, be kept busy painting till my ship was ready.

The Admiral sent for me. I explained to him my mission from the Admiralty. "The very thing," he said.



THE WALLS OF TARANTO:
CONVOY READY TO SAIL

40 VINU
ABNOFLIA

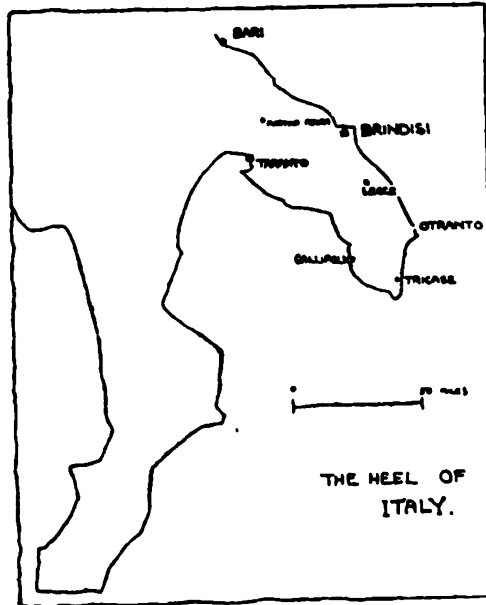
"There is one subject I particularly want. We will talk it over at lunch and I will send for the car and we will go and see the Italian Admiral."

I imagined I should paint the dauntless trawlers engaging the Austrian Navy or some equally historic enterprise, and then drive round the dockyard to see war-battered ships under repair. However, I asked no questions and waited for the Admiral to unfold his scheme.

After lunch he discussed the question of official pictures. By the bye, what a dreadful thing the word "official" is in relation to a picture. To call a thing "an official picture" is to load it with prejudice from the first.

It is almost as difficult to think of a sketch as official and thrilling at the same time as it is to think of a woman described as an "official wife" as coy and alluring.

"In making a series of pictures of the neighbourhood of Taranto," he said, "there is one subject which I think every one who has been stationed there would like to have as a memento of these days. About fifteen miles north of



the harbour, on the road to Martina Franca, there are some very curious conical stone houses"—

I knew it: the Bunny Hutches under a very ordinary name! It would be derogatory to the dignity of the service no doubt, for an Admiral to talk about houses as "Bunny Hutches." I swallowed half a cup of boiling coffee to hide my excitement—"conical stone houses," continued the Admiral, "of very remarkable adaptability to the needs of a growing population. It will not take you an hour to get there in the car, when I have fitted you out with a permit to sketch."

I expressed my willingness to do my best. A clause in my marching orders came to my mind: "*You will consult with senior naval officers and adopt, when practicable, their suggestions as to subjects which in their opinion should be included,*" etc.

I could always fall back on that if my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty deemed my marine sketching too architectural.

To make a long story short I went, I saw, I was conquered. I found the Bunny Hutches were the last word in simplicity of cottage architecture, and solved at once, in all stony regions, the problem of housing the labouring classes.

The idea, like all good inventions, is at once obvious and practicable. Land in this region is very stony in its original state, and for this reason, almost valueless. Two or three men get together, clear a given area, and pile the stones

into a circular wall about twelve feet in diameter and about three feet thick, leaving an opening for a door and windows. When this reaches a height of about eight feet the diameter is narrowed as the building rises until the top closes up as a dome, about sixteen feet in height.

By this time the land is cultivable and of value as a



Conical stone house near Taranto.

“holding.” The stones collected from it have made a house which should last a thousand years. No wood is necessary except for the door and windows. No cement or mortar, although a little facing is given to the inside wall, and no scaffolding.

An R.N.V.R. officer, who is an architect by profession, came with me one day. He was delighted and expressed

his opinion that it was the most economical and efficient system of cottage building he had ever seen and the most artistic. The great trouble with cottage property in England is that the timbers of the roof get rotten and the roof sags and begins to leak. A new roof from time to time is a continual tax on the landlord. These roofs will last practically for ever. Nothing but a little whitewash and perhaps repairs to a door or window will be necessary in a century.

The simplest form of this habitation I have shown in Fig. 1. It might serve as a design for a bachelor residence. Fig. 2 is a slight enlargement on this—design for young married couple. As the needs of the happy pair grow they can “throw out wings” to their heart’s content. This is done by building more “hutches” around the parent stock and knocking doors through from one to the other. Large families bring with them no problems with these people. They enlarge the house by clearing more land until a result something like Fig. 3 is arrived at.

Beyond Martina Franca a distance of some ten miles or so we came to a place that could only be described as the capital of Bunny-Hutch Land. There were not just clusters of cones but whole streets of them—in fact a small town, for the modern buildings are very much in the minority, and look like recent innovations, as no doubt they are. I was told that this place has been specially preserved by the Italian government as a national museum—something after the manner of the mediæval Rotenburg in Bavaria. The



A CRUSADERS' WATCH TOWER,
GALLIPOLI, ITALY

TO VINU
AMBORLIAO

sketch at the heading of this chapter will give some idea of a street of these curious houses.

We visited some of these cottages and found them delightfully quaint inside and, as far as all those we went into were concerned, spotlessly clean. The good people who lived therein, loaded us with small presents in the shape of grapes and luscious fruit from their gardens and regarded us, I am sure, with an amused toleration, as some of those eccentric people, who chose to live in rectangular houses, like the inhabitants of Taranto. The natural and most convenient form of house was one like theirs, the shape of a bee-hive, and why on earth anybody should want to make it any other shape passed their comprehension. They had dwelt in these houses and their fathers before them as long as they had any records, and since they were perfectly contented and happy what possible purpose could be served by designing them dwelling places like packing cases?

I found I had to curb my enthusiasm for "Bunny Hutches" and get on with my more orthodox naval subjects. Consequently I embarked in a motor-launch which was camouflaged, as all M.L.'s in these waters, in grey and white diagonal zones, and came to Gallipoli—not the Dardanelles Gallipoli, but the Italian one across the gulf—a base for British M.L.'s and drifters.



Fig. 3.—More elaborate design to meet the needs of a large family.

There is a great quantity of soft stone in this district which is used for building. It is volcanic in origin and so easily worked that it offers great temptation to the sculptor to make it do for everything. The result is that the façade of the cathedral is adorned with pock-marked saints and bishops, for the weather soon gets into it. Some delicate work in low relief in some of the Gallipoli buildings looks as if it is hewn out of sponges.

The usual method of quarrying this stone is to *saw* it into blocks. Whenever there is a faulty bit that will cut to waste it is left standing up like some strange and fantastic monument while the rest of the rock is sawn away from it. Hence the strange shapes in the foreground of "The air road to Otranto" facing this page.

This corner of the world, the heel of Italy, is quite out of the run of tourists. I do not expect the average traveller has heard so much as the names of these Adriatic towns except Brindisi, which is the port for Egypt. Consequently the peasant is very unsophisticated. He will show you his home and be genuinely astonished that you find anything novel about it.

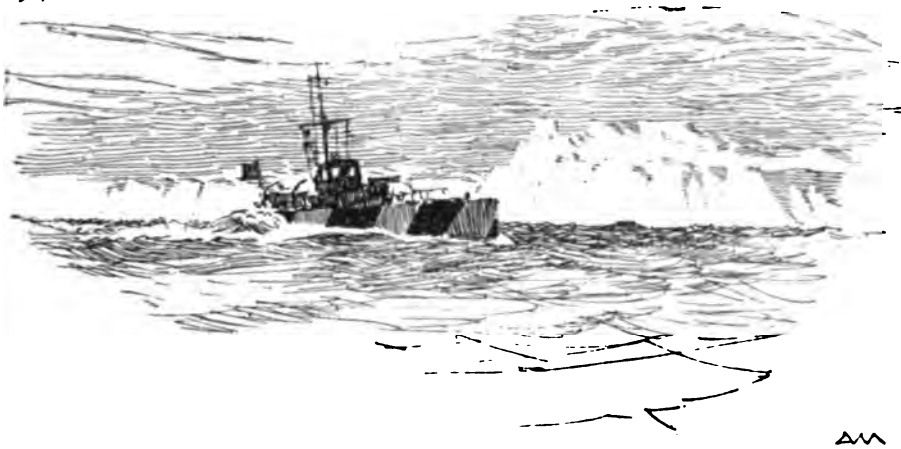
The handiwork of the crusaders is noticeable in churches and watch-towers, and it appears that this was a warm corner for attack from the Turks at sea. At Gallipoli, I sketched one of these buildings (facing p. 18) and this will serve as a type for dozens of others along the coast. I must confess great ignorance of the history of this district. Travelling light, I had cut down my baggage to the



THE AIR-ROAD TO OTRANTO

70 VINU
ALPACHUA

slenderest dimensions and consequently had not even a guide book. Enquiries from the people of the country themselves did not get me very far, partly because of my very slight knowledge of Italian, partly because the peasants spoke a dialect that rendered this slight knowledge useless, and partly because the people themselves did not know much



Camouflaged M.L. off South Italian coast

about it. One good man told me when I enquired the age of a church which I should have unhesitatingly put down to the crusaders as "*very old, very old indeed—so old that no one in the village could remember when it was built.*"

Such information as I could gather was obtained by holding a stilted but animated conversation in dog Latin with a dear old priest, but this method, although sporting and fraught with excitement, did not yield very much topographical knowledge. I shall have to get the subject up when I get back to England. Meanwhile such sketches

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R5

as I can send will speak for themselves and the reader can be his own archæologist.

From here I went by car to Tricasse, a little place on the Adriatic shore which is used by some of our small craft as a port of shelter.

It was a delightful ride. Above, three British sea-planes were climbing into a gold-grey sky, the air-road to Otranto. Quarries of volcanic stone abounded making fantastic rock fore-grounds, and a lovely expanse of olive-covered country stretched away to the south, a glittering wilderness of sombre green,

“Far as the wild swan wings, to where the sky
Dipt down to sea and sands.”





PISGAH HEIGHTS.



ISMAILA



Port Said.

II.—PISGAH HEIGHTS

THE little harbour at Tricase will always live in the memory of Motor Launch adventurers in the Adriatic, for it was used exclusively by M.L.'s, no others of His Majesty's ships being able to adapt themselves to its Lilliputian proportions. Those boats at work on the Otranto anti-submarine barrage were wont to run in there for shelter, and as many as six have been known to berth there at once. Airmen reported that on these occasions a more splendid imitation of a newly opened sardine tin could not be imagined when viewed from a height, and the first glimpse vouchsafed to a traveller coming along the coast road was that of a most cunningly staged musical comedy at Daly's. The legend firmly believed in by all true Emellites,* concerning the shoal in

* I might explain for the benefit of the uninitiated that an Emellite is a man who dwells in an M.L. To many it may seem a piece of gratuitous information, but it may prevent any more of my readers searching for a tribe of aborigines instead of for motor launch officers in South Italy.

the fairway at the entrance to the harbour, is generically true even if apochryphal in its origin. The story goes that the commanding officer of an M.L. was showing a brick to his sub. How he came to have a brick on board in a country where only stone abounds I do not know unless it was for this reason regarded as a curio, or why he was leaning over the side of his boat when handling it is not apparent.

However, for some reason or other he *had* a brick and he *was* holding it out in the manner stated when, owing to some momentary carelessness, he let it fall and the fairway was blocked. Efforts on the part of the whole fleet to recover this brick were unavailing, and boats after that were constantly "going aground." The general locality of this obstacle was known, however, so it was marked on the chart as a shoal and by cautious navigation M.L.'s were still able to make their way in and out of the harbour.

Lector.—This is all very well, but I began a book entitled "The Last Crusade." I have been lured into reading it under false pretences. Having got through a long rambling chapter on sun-rises and problems of cottage-building, may I enquire when you are going to tell us something about the war in the Holy Land?

Pictor.—I am coming to that in good time, but I have heaps of sketches yet to work off on an unsuspecting public. I am going on a long time yet before getting across the Mediterranean.

Lector.—Then why on earth do you call yourself a



TRICASE

70 VIII
ABROGLIA

chronicler of a crusade, if you are going to write on all sorts of subjects nothing to do with it?

Pictor.—Patience, dear Lector. You are evidently unfamiliar with chronicles of the crusades or you would know that long, rambling and discursive writing is the proper thing, and no crusader who was worth his salt ever got to the Holy Land without taking an enormous time about it and generally engaging in all sorts of adventures *en route*. You see I can't get to Palestine too soon. It isn't done.

Peace broke out when I was at Gallipoli. I will not attempt to describe the Anglo-Italian jollifications, as they were probably tame to the scenes elsewhere, except in one particular, and that was on the next day in the cathedral. A solemn Te Deum was sung, and the old Bishop gave an address from his throne. There was nothing remarkable about this, but what was amazingly picturesque and impressive was the demeanour of the people. They were grouped in masses in the nave, without chairs for the most part, old peasants and children, rich and poor, quite unconscious of any sort of formality. Before the blazing altar the vested priests and acolytes in solemn array contrasted with these groups, sitting about the steps of the chancel, climbing up on anything to get a better view, and singing lustily. In bright and multitudinous colours they filled the nave like clusters of fruit and flowers heaped on the ground for a harvest thanksgiving. Two small and barefooted urchins had climbed inside the chancel, and were sitting on

the steps of the Bishop's throne, and nobody took the slightest notice or thought it irreverent. Imagine the feelings of a verger in an English cathedral under similar conditions. Picture the horror of the Dean and Chapter!

An amusing adventure occurred to me while staying in Gallipoli which is worth recording even if only to point a moral: the moral being that disaster lies in wait for him who once departs from the path of strict truth. Exploring the country with the Flag Lieutenant, who spoke Italian perfectly, I found myself in a perfectly dreadful situation one evening. We had entered a wayside cottage and were fraternizing with its cheery inhabitants when I was petrified with horror at seeing the good man of the house produce a large black bottle. I had suffered before, having made myself ill by drinking some home-made wine out of politeness, and vowed that the experiment should never be repeated.

They were already pouring it out and not a moment was to be lost. "Tell them that I am dangerously ill and under doctor's orders not to drink wine," I muttered hoarsely to the Flag Lieutenant.

"They won't understand," he replied grimly, "no doctor here would be such a fool. These people do not know what a teetotaler is!"

However, he explained. He sketched briefly some ingenious affliction of lumbago, tinged with brain fever, caused by shell-shock in the battle of Jutland. Death in the most horrible form would ensue if I touched one drop of wine.

I think, now, that he rather overdid it. The effect was almost as disastrous as if he had said nothing. They were tremendously sympathetic. They spoke in glowing terms of my bravery and heroism in the battle of Jutland (of course I wasn't in the battle of Jutland)—bravery which had, alas, deprived me of the greatest joy in life—good wine. To make up, to some small extent, for this terrible forced abstinence of mine the good woman of the house rushed and cooked me a special cake of polenta mixed with olive oil and flavoured with garlic. How I wished I had not refused the wine!

I managed to stow some of it away by stealth in my pockets and shut whole blocks in my sketch book, but they watched me so closely to see if I was enjoying it, that I had to munch most of it, occasionally looking up with a sickly grin. When I could stand it no longer, I made frantic signs to the Flag Lieutenant to say that we must go. He explained that my brain fever was coming on again and we left, loaded up with remedies for lumbago which they insisted on us taking for future emergencies.

At last, after weeks of delay, after alarums and excursions, that might have done duty for a pukka crusader of the time of Cœur-de-Lion, I set sail from Taranto and came to Egypt, landing at Port Said.

The advent of peace brought many problems to the world in general, and to an official artist sent out to make war pictures in the East, complications innumerable. For my *confrères* in the North Sea the situation was simple.

They were no doubt ordering canvases twenty feet across to paint the surrender of the Hun Fleet in the North Sea—good luck to them! But I, alas, who had been waiting years in the German Ocean, metaphorically brush in hand, for the *dénouement* found myself far away and out of touch. The Admiralty were so busy arranging about “der Tag” that they had probably forgotten my existence. Certainly they never sent me any instructions or modifications to my marching orders—so I “carried on.”

When I left London, in the full swing of war, it had not occurred to anyone that peace was so imminent, and no directions had been given me in the event of the cessation of hostilities. However, as most of my work was concerned with reconstruction of events now long since past, to be done on the spot, and with such material as I could find to hand, I expected to work very much as under war conditions. In some ways perhaps the job would be easier, but I could see great difficulties ahead.

Palestine was only part of my field, for I was under orders to proceed to Mesopotamia and make records of all naval work, both past and present, on the rivers, taking Palestine on the way. If I stayed long over this first part I should arrive in Mesopotamia when everything had been packed up and, beyond mud and palm trees, I might find nothing much to paint which had any connection with the war, and everybody gone home who could tell me anything about it.

So I decided that the only thing to do was to speed up.



THE GARDENS AT ISMAILIA

TO VIMU
AMBROGLIAO

If possible, I could make my notes in Palestine, and then push on to Aleppo and cross to Mosul, thus saving many weeks of travel.

I reported to the S.N.O., obtained his permission to "free lance" as I liked so far as transport was concerned, left most of my kit at a hotel, except a few sketch books, paints and clothes in a suit case, and took a boat to the sea-plane station. If it was a question of speed I must fly.

Of course, the sea-planes served now as a branch of the R.A.F., but it was only six months previous to this that they had been R.N.A.S. Consequently their doings, and these were many in the early days in Palestine, fell within my scope as a recorder of naval incidents.

The Major received me with open arms. Had I not sung the song of the sea-plane in my sketches from the first dawn of aviation? Samson, flying off the battleship *Africa*, the early days at Eastchurch, the flight to Portsmouth, and the evolution of the sea-plane in war, are they not written pictorially in the pages of *The Graphic*? So I dropped on my feet, or to be more aeronautical, on my floats.

The upshot of my visit to this station was that I was soon equipped with aerial photographs of all important events along the Palestine coast and had access to records of bombardments and movements. I was assisted by an intelligence officer who would go with me and keep me up to the scratch in accuracy wherever I should make a drawing. I was to fly to Ludd in the morning and he was to proceed there by train and join me on the next day. I should be

flown in a land machine by an experienced pilot who undertook not to loop the loop while I was painting in water-colour.

It is interesting to record here that it is quite possible to paint from an aeroplane. The speed is, of course, much too great to get a consistent view of anything except from a great height or at a great distance. The best way to make notes under these conditions is with black and white chalk or with lead pencil, writing in the colours and deciphering the whole thing afterwards. It is always foolish to make a great mess in water-colour when there is not time to do serviceable work. However, out of sheer curiosity I have painted in water-colour from an aeroplane. It is quite as easy as working in a train, with less vibration. In one tight place, I was painting during a spiral nose-dive and no water was spilt, but side-slipping is distinctly damp for the artist.

I slept that night in the pilot's tent and we were up before it was light, making our way towards the hangars. Lamps glimmered faintly towards the canal region and a forest of masts and funnels began to etch themselves upon the grey-green background of the sky. Air mechanics were already at work overhauling our machine, giving it a few finishing touches and doing something or other to it the nature of which I was too ignorant to know much. By the time the plane was out in the open and we had climbed into our seats the sun had come up out of the desert, casting a grotesque image of our machine upon the sand ; " and long



THE M.I. QUAY AT ISMAILIA

TO VIMU
ANABOLIAO

the level shadows lay, as if they too the beams would be of some great airy argosy." Then we raced across the hard floor of the desert, turning towards the sun, and rose in spirals till the canal, harbour, town and ships looked like a miniature world far beneath us. When we had climbed some 3,000 feet we kept on a southerly course towards Suez.

There is no better way of getting a comprehensive idea of a battlefield than this, and the pilot pointed out old trenches and positions along the left bank of the canal. He showed me a track upon which the Germans had brought mines across the desert in sections and placed them in the canal. Unfortunately we had not got speaking tubes rigged, consequently he had to shut off his engine when we talked, and this meant coming down a good deal ; but a few minutes' climbing soon got us back again to our original height. It is not desirable to fly low in case of engine trouble and the possibility of having to make a forced landing. In this case the higher you are the better are you able to choose where you will take the ground.

Just beyond the Bitter Lakes, on the eastern side of the canal and near an aerodrome (I forget the name of the place), the pilot swooped down low and showed me an old canal built in the time of the Pharaohs.

In the early morning light when the shadows were long, this showed up distinctly as a trench, running almost parallel to the Suez canal and crossing the Sweetwater canal near the aerodrome. Subsequently I did a rough sketch of it from the ground (reproduced on p. 36). It

had been to some extent filled in by earth from a temporary railway cutting and is difficult to trace and in parts is lost altogether. I am no archæologist, but I understand that this ancient waterway joined the Gulf of Suez to the Bitter Lakes and so in part at least anticipated de Lesseps' epoch-making work.

Flying north again we reached Kantara and descended in spirals to the aerodrome. The huge camp looked like a very expensive set of toys at Harrods laid out on a table. I found myself wondering how they had managed to make it all look so realistic, when, bump, we had come to earth again.

Here we obtained the latest intelligence about the flying stations in Palestine and the news was not encouraging. Peace had already been at work. El Arish had "packed up" and Gaza, and the nearest aerodrome for petrol was Ramleh, which was too far for flight in the machine we were using, her petrol-carrying capacity not being enough for a distance of over 200 miles.

"We must get some petrol sent on to Gaza," said the pilot, "and it can't be there till to-morrow. However, although we must go back to Port Said now, I will show you the Promised Land."

So we rose again in the air and climbed and climbed. Then he shut off his engine and leaned forward: "I don't like the look of the weather," he said. "Watch those clouds coming up. But we'll see what we can."

A bank of fleecy vapour was coming up from the sea



THE APPARITION

"Like the living creatures in Ezekiel's vision, it was set in the midst of fiery wheels."

TO VIMU
LIBERTY

and slowly moving southward. We flew along the coast line towards El Arish at about three thousand feet and kept ascending slightly. The clouds thickened and presented formidable ramparts. "I'll get over them," the pilot shouted. With



On the Suez Canal.

that, we flew straight at them and everything was blotted out. It was very cold and damp and for a time I lost all sense of direction, but assumed we were still climbing. Soon the sun showed fitfully and pale from time to time, like the moon through mist, and then we leapt out suddenly into the blue. A glorious sea of tumbling cloud-foam was spread out beneath us, with here and there an opening through which sunlit patches of the desert glowed like jewels.

"Five thousand," shouted the pilot.

For some time now we flew by the compass, seeing little of the land. Then we descended slightly or the clouds were piled higher and I noticed with a start what at first I took to be another plane ahead of us and a little lower down. A glance, however, soon showed that it was our shadow on the clouds and not only a shadow but a shadow encircled by a rainbow.

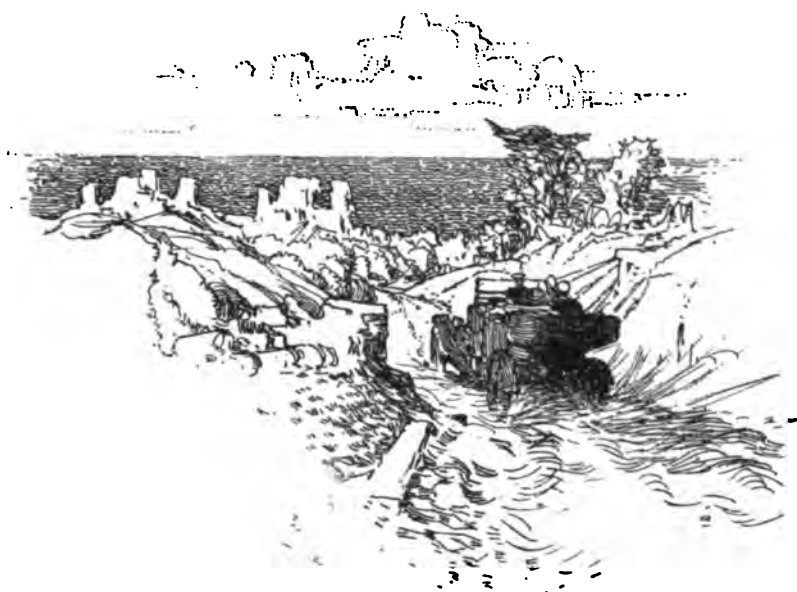
I think I have never seen a more amazing effect in cloud scenery than this. Mysterious and changeful, now visible,

now only half seen, now vanished altogether to appear again with startling distinctness, this shadowy companion in the sky moved with us. Like the living creatures in Ezekiel's vision, it was set in the midst of fiery wheels. "And when the living creature was lifted up from the earth the wheels were lifted up. As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about."

And so we flew on till the clouds thinned, and through them far away we could see a faint blue distance chequered with light. It was Palestine.



An ancient Suez Canal constructed by Pharaoh.



THE STREETS OF ASKELON.



Barges at Suez.



III.—THE STREETS OF ASKELON

THE Intelligence Officer at the sea-plane station who was to come with me proved to be an excellent travelling companion, quiet (relatively), efficient at his job, and with a keen sense of humour for which I was much thankful. We were different enough in temperament to get on well, and I could readily forgive his assumption of the rôle of a warder retained to keep in check the vagaries of a harmless monomaniac, because he regarded gathering together all the paints, brushes and things that I invariably leave behind on my sketching excursions, as a responsibility coming within the sphere of his legitimate duties.

Such a stickler was he for system that he quite frightened me and at first I tried to hide my constitutional untidiness. I think my theories on the subject were far ahead of my

practice, for once when I ventured the reckless statement that I believed in a place for everything and everything in its place he answered innocently : " Yes, but you seem to have such curious places."

He kept a note-book in which he wrote profusely. I found out afterwards that he is an author in private life and a contributor to *Punch*, and I had a shrewd suspicion that he regarded me as copy. He used to tell me that he was writing my life and so I named him Boswell. As a matter of fact he kept copious notes of everything we saw and threatened to publish a huge *exposé* of my methods and send it to the Admiralty if I departed one hair's breadth from the truth in my pictorial records. The name Boswell, however, stuck, and I shall use it hereinafter to avoid giving him cause to blush whenever I record anything nice about him and to dodge any action for libel should I sometimes appear to hold him up to ridicule.

The upshot of my essays in flying was that I went by train to Ludd with Boswell. Even if we sent petrol on by rail, there was some doubt about the weather, and it looked as if the quick method might, after all, prove to be the slower.

"It's going to be the tortoise after all," said Boswell, "the air has failed you." He just managed to dodge a missile hurled by the pilot who was seeing us off at the Port Said aerodrome and we started in the car. Thirty odd miles had to be done by road to catch the Palestine train at Kantara.



H.M. Transport "Wiltshire" at Port Said.

It was dark, but we had powerful lamps, which showed up tamarask trees and the banks of the Sweetwater canal in picturesque relief, while on the other side the searchlights of ships coming up from Suez glared from afar across the level country.

The train left Kantara East at 11.30 and was due to arrive at Ludd at half-past seven in the morning. A train from there would arrive at Jerusalem in the early afternoon. Thus, under peace conditions, when the fast route to Egypt *via* Brindisi is running again Jerusalem will be brought within five days of Charing Cross.

I remember that at the time we didn't consider the carriages particularly comfortable. Each compartment had leather-covered bunks, two on each side as in a ship's cabin, and the coaches were not noticeable for the excellence of their springs. There was plenty of bumping and plenty of waiting.

However, we were new to railway travelling in Palestine. Before many days were out we looked back on that luxurious train as the last word in pampered comfort.

We were awakened by an unusually noticeable bump, which in England would have been regarded as a railway accident, and looked out. There seemed to be nothing particularly the matter, but the train waited for some time. Meanwhile day broke and we saw we were in a flat land, planted with ground vines and bordered to the east by hills. On the other side of the line, to the west, and about two or three miles distant, ran a line of sandhills. It



THE STREETS OF ASKELON
1. THE HIGH STREET

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Aerodrome, Port Said.

seemed to be country immediately bordering on the sea. We found out afterwards that it was in the neighbourhood of Askelon.

We turned in again, and some time afterwards I was conscious of the train pursuing its bumpy way once more. I slept fitfully, but was awakened by a great shouting. Boswell put his head out.

"The Philistines be upon us!" he exclaimed. "Do you want a luncheon basket?"

A ragged concourse of women and children were bearing down upon the train shouting:

"Orran chez, na-utz!"

"Orran chez, na-utz!"

in a kind of chant. Circumstantial evidence in the way of golden fruit and bags of walnuts indicated that they had oranges and nuts to sell and thus we were led to understand the burden of their song.

This kind of massed attack by the refreshment department continued all along the line until we arrived at Ludd. Here we reported to the General and borrowed a Ford box car, complete with driver, and started for Askelon without any more delay.

The roads near Ludd are good. Although the ground

is soft and sandy, some ingenious road maker thought of the idea of laying down wire netting and this effectively keeps the wheels of the vehicles from sinking in. It is good going "on the wire," and a firm springy surface for marching. However, when we began to approach Askelon we were well away from such mechanical aids and had several tussles with the sand. At one place we had to get out and push while the snorting Ford behaved very much like a threshing machine, but it advanced slowly nevertheless.

After passing through this zone of soft shifting sand the road reaches the highest point and the sea comes into sight, relieved against which are masses of masonry. At first glance they look like tufts of thick trees grey against the blue, but a second look settles the point that they are crumbled remains of stone work.

Immediately to the right a track leads by some wretched buildings and we soon found ourselves passing through a village, the present-day collection of hovels that reaches up to the ancient walls and does duty for the once proud city of Askelon. It might be called, to use a service expression, "acting" Askelon, for the sight of the busy streets of ancient times and of Crusading memory is uninhabited. Roughly speaking, the remains of the city walls lie in a horse-shoe shape with the open end towards the sea.

For the most part the ever-encroaching sand has covered all but the largest fragments and there appears to the eye nothing but a circle of sand-dunes out of which crop up squat towers of crumbled stone work. Within these



**THE STREETS OF ASKELON:
II. THE STRAND**

TO WHOM
ADDRESS



The pontoon bridge over the Canal at Kantara.

boundaries gardens flourish. These are watered by wells, in which, if you look down, you can see more of the glory of old Askelon than anywhere above ground. Marble pillars and granite columns are built into their sides.

In describing Askelon as a horse-shoe with the open ends to the sea I have, perhaps, given an erroneous impression of the shore. The coast line here is high and the open end falls away suddenly to the water. It is as if a horse-shoe were placed upon a step and the sea is at the foot of the step.

Even this step abounds in traces of masonry. Evidently the whole sea-front was of great height and must have been very formidable. In two places there are standing walls now, and one mass of ruin, thought to have been part of the ancient harbour, abounds in granite pillars set into the stone work horizontally and protruding like huge guns.

This feature is common in other parts of the walls at Askelon and I have noticed the same thing in the ruins of Tyre. The only reason I can think of to explain this construction is that these pillars were taken from the ruins of the ancient city in the middle ages, and incorporated in the stone work of new walls as "binders" to strengthen the masonry. Tyre, Sidon and Askelon were all rebuilt in the time of the Crusaders and much of their architecture shows material worked up again from ancient remains.

To drive a car through the village is indeed a work of some skill. A custom that the inhabitants have of sitting about in the road and the fact that the streets are wildly precipitous and the turnings abrupt makes the journey one of glorious uncertainty. I was once induced to embark in some wiggle-woggle tubs in a "fun city." It was tremendous fun to everybody who wasn't in the tubs. The joke consisted in being hurled about, turned round and round and then being brought up suddenly with a crash that made you sore for days afterwards. The sensations experienced in passing through one of these villages in a car is very similar.

As a spectacle our advent in the streets of Askelon must have been very imposing. All the bigger children in the village ran in front shouting and all those that could not get in front ran shouting behind. The older inhabitants gazed spell-bound from the house-tops or tumbled over each other in the roadway in abject terror as the juggernaut with its frenzied devotees drew nearer. One old woman subsided



**H.M. MONITOR "MAVIS" BOMBARDING
TURKISH OBSERVATION POST SITUATED
IN THE RUINS OF ASKELON**

70 VINU
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in the very centre of the track, piercing the air with shrieks and making not the slightest attempt to move. Two or three other women rushed out from a house and carried her away to a place of safety. She was still screaming at the top of her voice.

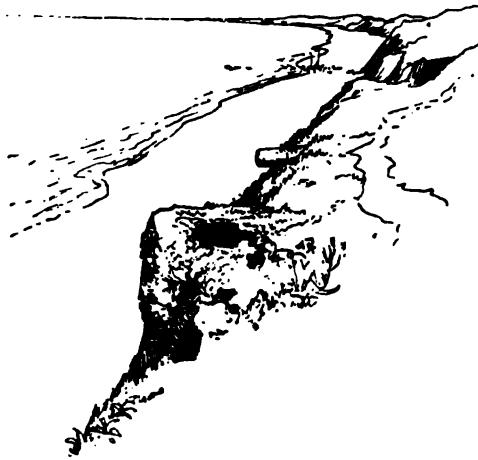
I climbed up the slope at the toe of the horse-shoe where are the biggest traces of the walls and started sketching the scene, for here was the sight of a naval incident during General Allenby's great advance.

It was reported to the Admiral that heavy and accurate firing was coming from some position to the south of Askelon and it was thought an observation post was stationed somewhere near. The monitor *Mavis* was despatched to "search" for this position. It was found that the observation post was somewhere in these south wall ruins and the *Mavis* accordingly "searched" with a six-inch gun. Almost immediately the fire from this quarter became very inaccurate and finally ceased and our troops were no more harassed from this direction.

The view from here is very impressive, especially on a wild and stormy evening at dusk. The wind-swept ruins on the ridge, out of which stunted trees struggle in perpetual warfare with the choking sand, the gardens within the sheltered loop filled and watered by a few solitary Arabs, the great grey sweep of the sea from which the wind is moaning—these go to make up a scene of utter desolation.

The miserable streets of the village, wherein one sees occasionally a carved stone from some palace built into

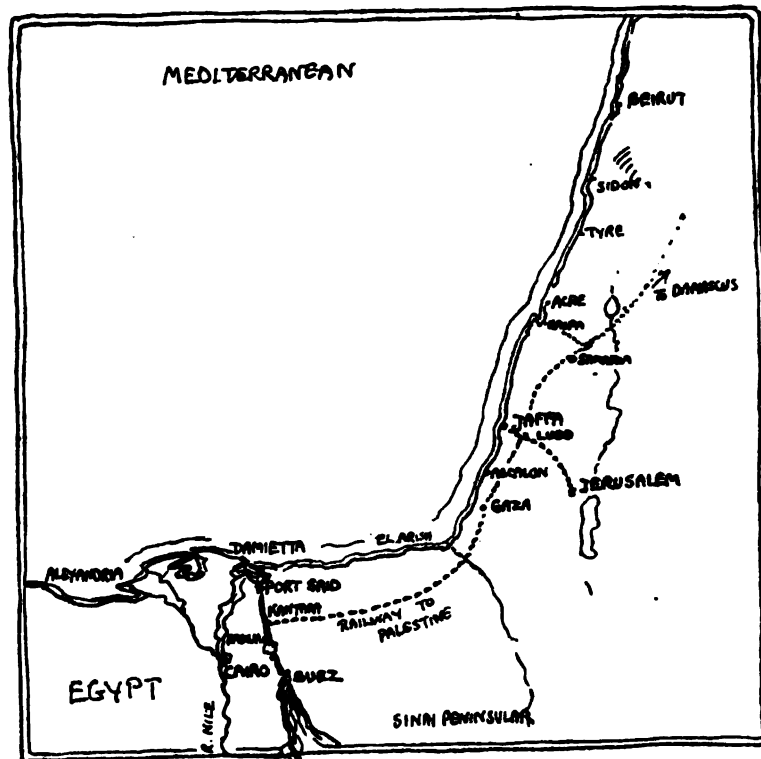
mean and dirty walls, deepen, if possible, the feeling of contrast between this place and the mighty sea-port in whose harbour the Legions of the Cross have mustered and from whose proud towers the banner of an English king has flown.



ASKELON



CHARIOTS OF IRON.





IV.—CHARIOTS OF IRON

IT is a curious fact and one for which I have not as yet discovered any adequate explanation that everyone connected with the railways in Palestine becomes extraordinarily optimistic. At least that is what I found, both among officers and men, during my travels in November and December of 1918. The higher up in rank you looked the more optimism did you discover. Sergeants were helpful and encouraging. If there wasn't any train in sight they were always ready to tell you of one that they thought might be coming. R.T.O.'s invariably had a firm and touching faith in their expresses getting to their destinations within a few hours of their scheduled time. Majors cheered you up by stories of whole junctions of trains a little bit further on, and on one occasion I met a colonel—this is the highest I ever struck in connection with transport—who estimated a time for getting from Gaza to Damascus that



Ras el Ain.

would have done credit to the Great Western Railway even in peace time.

We wanted to get to Beirut and to visit Tul Keram and El Afule, scenes of sea-plane bombardments. We therefore decided, buoyed up as we were by railway optimism, to to travel there *via* Damascus, thus passing through Tul Keram, which is the junction for the piece of line *via* Samaria which reaches El Afule, where we could change and get to the Jordan Valley and Samach on the sea of Galilee.

Somebody, to encourage us, stated that the journey without stopping anywhere for the night would take forty-eight hours. As a matter of fact, we found that six days was the quickest possible time in which it could be done. The train from Damascus ran only twice a week.

At Ludd we made a fresh start, getting into an entirely new train, made up on different principles from the semi-luxurious one that runs on the section to Kantara. Instead of carriages these were trucks of various design. The "dining cars" and "Pullmans" reserved specially for officers



A little town on a hill.

were boarded over with planks to keep off the sun. These were placed with about one inch in between them, so that the roof did not in any way keep out rain and it was naturally somewhat draughty. We sat on our baggage, for there were no seats of any kind. In spite of these disadvantages the usual infection of railway optimism got hold of us and we contrasted our bloated luxury with the lesser comforts of travellers in other trucks that had no roofs and only low sides.

If for the sake of comparison we called our vehicle first class, there were fourth, fifth and sixth classes. The people even in the sixth class, natives huddled together on the floor of an open truck, reckoned themselves fortunate indeed that they did not travel as some of their less favoured brethren, holding on the outside of the truck and getting a precarious footing on the couplings.

I think it would be interesting to record the various degrees of luxury in travel beginning at the very bottom and showing the ascent of man from one luxury to another.

7th class:—Natives for whom there isn't any room inside, holding on anywhere. This is probably not

allowed, but owing to pressure it is done between the stations.

6th class :—Natives packed like sardines in an open truck.

5th class :—Natives in open trucks seated on their baggage with some room to move.

4th class :—Natives with wives and dependents occasionally seated in chairs which they have brought with them.

3rd class :—Trucks (sometimes covered) for Egyptian or Indian soldiers.

2nd class :—Trucks (generally covered) for British soldiers.

1st class :—Trucks (covered) for sahibs. High degree of refinement. Officers in these carriages never drink beer out of tea-cups. It isn't done. Besides, they often haven't any tea-cups.

The sketch I made at the station at Tul Keram, which shows a truck-load of Egyptian soldiers (see p. 60), somehow is strangely reminiscent of the old pictures you see of the first train to Brighton.

Sundry gains arise from the very disadvantages of this kind of journey. It's so uncomfortable that no one would dream of travelling for pleasure. Consequently only people under orders or those fired with some indomitable purpose travel at all. Thus tickets with all the irritating restrictions become unnecessary. At first we used to get movement orders to authorize us to travel from place to place, but we



27.
The Kevan

soon found this punctiliousness was a work of supererogation. It would never have entered anybody's head that we wanted to go in the train except out of dire military necessity.

When it was dark, confusion became worse confounded, because the train kept stopping and we could not see if it was at a station or not, or if we thought we might be at a legitimate halt there was no means of telling which it was. We used to shout enquiries to the engine driver and pass it on from truck to truck, and he would give his views on the subject which were shouted back again in instalments. And so the night wore on.

On the left of the line ahead, and across level country we could see a long, low castle. It was Ras el Ain, built by Cœur-de-Lion, and appeared a long, rambling fortress, golden yellow in the sun and situated on the margin of a green and reed-covered swamp. On the other side, some miles distant, the ramparts of the hills began and a little city on a hill seemed to look down upon us as a sentinel stationed to keep a watch on the plain at his feet. This was strongly fortified by the Turks and for many a long day marked the front which he held.

He was all right for a long time in the hills. His communications were bad, but the Turkish soldier can live on very little, so that the shortness of rolling stock and railway difficulties in the mountains behind him did not affect his defensive campaign much. But when it came to pushing us off the plain it was another matter. For a long time supplies had been accumulated and the work of our



TUL KERAM

TO VIMU
ABORTUO

indomitable railway engineers had begun to tell. North-Western engines and thousands of trucks were not there for nothing.

History repeats itself. The Turk was in the position of Judah after the death of Joshua. He stayed in the mountains, "but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron."

Tul Keram came into sight, a white-walled town built on a ridge at the foot of which lay a large rest camp. Masses of captured waggons and guns had been collected and it was here that the gauge of the railway changed. The Turks had used a narrow gauge line right through to Ludd and beyond, but during our advance we had torn up this light line, whole sections of it strewing the side of the new track, and pushed on with our broad gauge. Even now there were traces of the former state of things, notably a narrow gauge engine being transported on a broad gauge trolley, as shown in the sketch at the head of this chapter.

Tul Keram was the headquarters of the Turkish VIIIth army and the key to the Samaritan line to El Afule. In the early days it had plenty of attention from our sea-planes and when the great attack was launched from the coastal plane it fell into our hands and we captured an enormous amount of transport waggons and rolling stock.

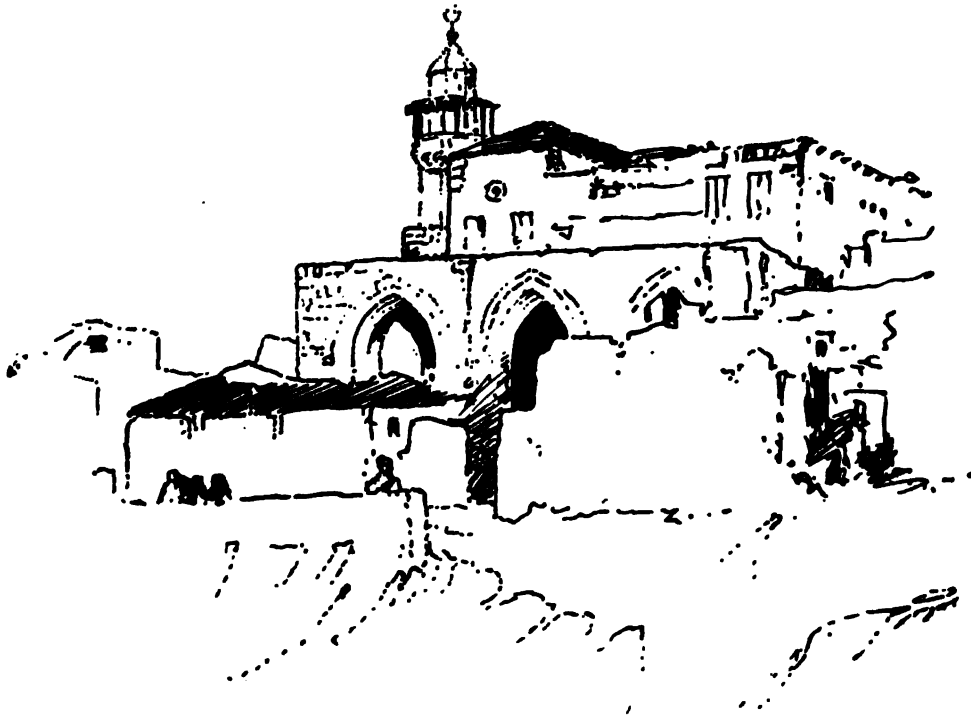
General Allenby writing of this advance said :

"With the exception of a small and scattered reserve, the whole of the Turkish Force west of the Jordan was enclosed in a rectangle 45 miles in length and only 12 miles

in depth. The northern edge of the rectangle was a line from Jisr ed Damieh on the Jordan, through Nablus and Tul Keram to the sea. All the enemy's communications to Damascus ran northward from the eastern half of this line, converging on El Afule and Beisan, some 25 miles to the north. El Afule, Beisan and Deraa were the vital points on his communications. If they could be seized, the enemy's retreat could be cut off."

Of all the ironies of nomenclature that ever were, I think the word "rest" in association with one of these camps is the most delicious example. The tent we occupied was a sorry affair that had seen better days. The weather was windy, and the bottom part of the canvas was adrift, flapping about in a most uncomfortable manner, and beyond remedying. We were fortunate in possessing some candles, but these we could not keep alight. A deafening din was kept up from time to time by motor lorries negotiating the rutty substitute for a road that ran close by our tent, so that we were kept in suspense as to whether we should find ourselves flattened out or not, if the steering should be a little erratic.

At Tul Keram the train decided it would not go any further that day. We took things quite philosophically, however, and found a tent in a rest camp hard by and made ourselves tolerably comfortable. A group of Tommies sitting by the railway line and full of railway optimism were singing a music-hall ditty, something about "Watching the trains come in." They were led by a humorist,



The Mosque, Tui Keram.

mimicking the conductor of an orchestra, in pukka low comedian style. He sang solo parts and raised his baton dramatically to bring in a chorus. And a right noisy chorus it was too. It went something like this:—

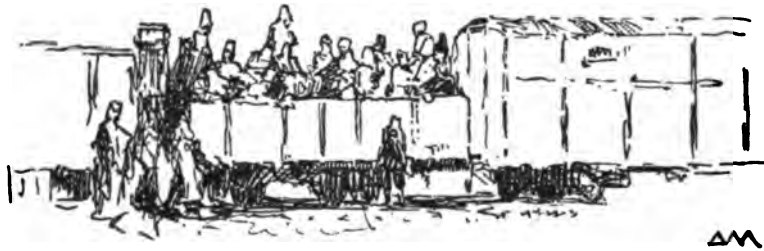
Solo : Watching the trains come in,
Watching the trains come in,
There we were sitting hand-in-hand,
As only lovers can understand !

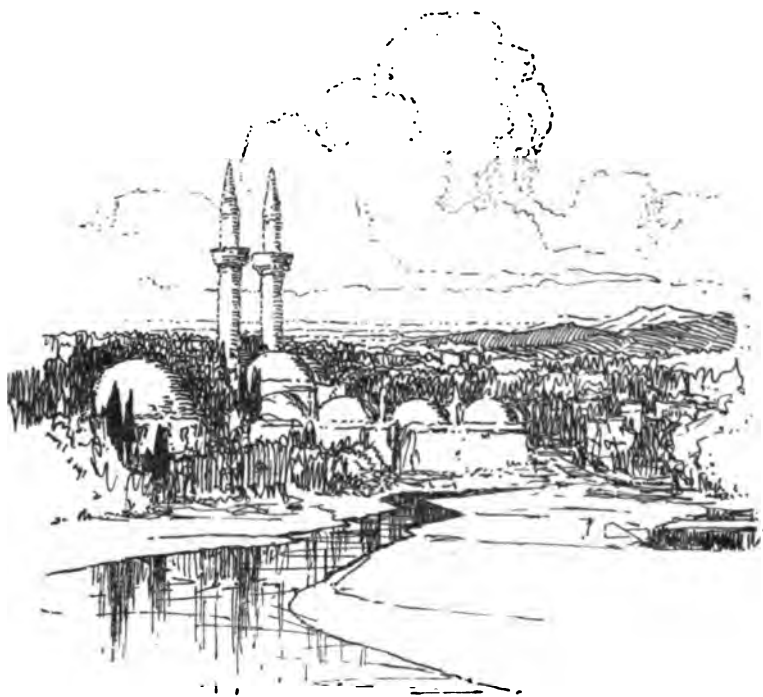
(pp.) Watching the trains come in,

(Cres.) We could hear the porter shout,

Full Chorus : And when we had watched all the trains come in

(fff) We watched all the trains go out !





AM

ABANA AND PHARPAR

J. V. WARD
CONNEAUTVILLE, PENN.
CRAWFORD CO.
P. 5



The East Gate
Damascus



V.—ABANA AND PHARPAR

WHEN the Turks, such remnants of them as were left, fled up the Yarmuk valley, they destroyed the railway bridge at a point a few miles above the mouth of the ravine where it opens into the Jordan Valley. Consequently there was a section, joining up the line to the Hauran and the line from Samaria, which had to be done by road. This was an amazing journey by motor lorry upon perilous tracks that skirted the edges of a savage defile. It was a path unfenced and tortuous and overhanging dreadful depths. I think I have never been so glad to get any piece of road behind me as that one.

It was not light when we piled our baggage into the lorries and climbed upon it to keep on as best we could. It was difficult to do so, and we were grey with dust in a few minutes from starting and shaken almost to pieces. I find it very difficult to give any adequate description of this kind of lorry travelling because the reader cannot imagine the extraordinary state of what are here called roads, or realize what an amazing amount of swaying and rocking a motor lorry can do, without turning over. Think of a rutty track with a surface as rough as a ploughed field and so uneven that one wheel of a vehicle will be a few feet higher than the other, the up and down sides alternating so that violent lurching is unavoidable. Then throw in ditches at right angles enough to bring up anything with a violent jerk and intersperse with unexpected holes and lumps—and you will be able to form some idea of the surface on a good, dry day. But that effort of imagination will not enable you to picture the journey from the point of view of the unfortunate traveller in the lorry.

I will try and describe therefore soberly and without exaggeration what it *feels* like.

In this particular instance we were rather crowded up. Some twelve of us were packed into the vehicle together with some thirty pieces of baggage of various weights and bulk. We were generally on top and the baggage underneath. At least that was the arrangement when we started.

At first we negotiate a fairly level bit of road, and the new hands, who haven't travelled like this before, begin to



DERAA,
THE EDREI OF THE BIBLE

40. 1940
APPROVED

think that the terrors of motor lorry rides have been rather overdrawn. Suddenly there is a tremendous crash that sends half of us from the back of the vehicle on an involuntary visit to those in the front. It is merely the front wheels negotiating a ditch. The uninitiated think there has been an accident, but the old hands cling on firmly to something to help them through the bump of the back wheels.

Then, when we had sorted ourselves out, we find there is a list to starboard that looks like turning us over and there is danger of getting pinned down by the shifting cargo. A few fortunate ones are on the top side of this moving mass, but their turn comes next, and an avalanche, like a returning wave, bears down upon them as a tremendous list sets in to port. Then we run on an even keel again and begin to think things are looking better, until we stop with a jerk and some invisible force lifts the whole lorry bodily into the air and drops it again with a deadening thud. Then there is silence and the invisible force does it again.

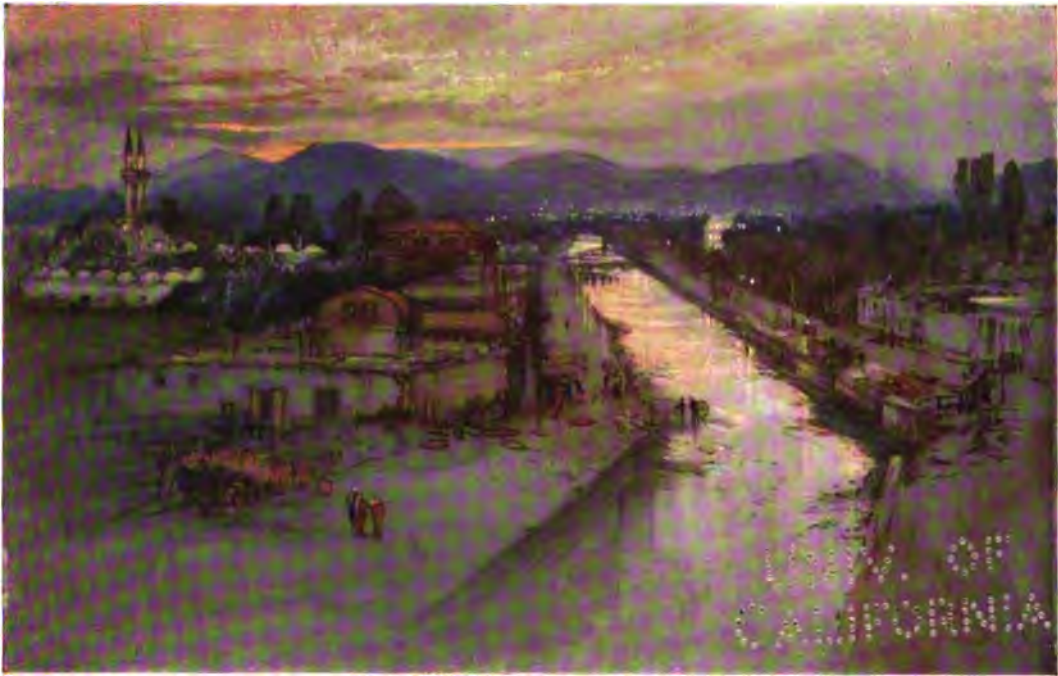
I have never been in a condition to look out during one of these movements and can give no explanation, scientific or otherwise, of the phenomenon. I merely record the sensation of it in plain terms.

The railway at Samach passes close to the south of the sea of Galilee, and before we were well under way on this perilous ride, dawn had broken sufficiently to reveal the mountains and show the busy camp in the mysterious light

of the morning. In spite of the difficulties of observation and the impossibility of sketching anything whatsoever from the lorry I can remember the scene vividly from the few glimpses I obtained as we started off.

A fresh wind was blowing from the silver grey waters of the lake and the blue crests of the hills on the eastern shore cut into an amber sky. Across the plain stretched an army of camels, dimly seen and throwing up a dust that rose like steam from a simmering pan. They advanced towards us, a moving belt of brown and grey relieved by jewel-like patches of blue which denoted the drivers of the caravan. Beyond and above them, across the Jordan with its green wilderness and reeds, loomed the walls of the valley over against Bethshan, dark and forbidding. This camel corps was moving up to Damascus and we saw it from time to time, an endless procession upon the heights, as we left in the train.

The road the motor lorries took enters the ravine of the Yarmuk on the left-hand side and climbs till it runs along the edge of a cliff, hundreds of feet high. There is no sort of parapet at places and the turns and twists at the edge of that sheer drop are a little bit too thrilling. One bit of bad steering and we should have been over, but our driver, probably with experience gathered from London streets, takes it all very coolly, and reassures us that it isn't really as dangerous as it looks. We arrive at Hamath looking like a rather battered shift of cement workers, completely grey, clothes, hair and complexion.



DAMASCUS

NO. 1000
ABSORBIAO

The train ride up to the Hauran is a wild one indeed. It is a piece of line completed some years before the war, planned by German engineers and built by labour chiefly from the Turkish army. It took us six hours before we emerged from the gorge by the falls of the Yarmuk and a town perched up on a peninsula of cliff, and ran along level country to Deraa, the ancient Edrei of the Bible.

The train stopped. The engine started to take in water. Rumour said that we were going to be here for half-an-hour, and even the R.T.O. didn't seem to think the train would be ready to move off in less time than that.

"Shall we go over the top?" asked Boswell. "It looks rather possible."

"Twenty minutes' rapid fire," I replied, seizing a box of chalks and a sketch book.

"We'll do it," responded Boswell with enthusiasm, "or perish in the attempt."

I might explain here that "going over the top" was Boswell's expression to describe a manœuvre often repeated during our wanderings. Time and tide and ordinary trains we knew waited for no man, but these trains waited about for something or somebody at all times, and when once a train stops it seems to be a point of etiquette not to start it again at once, however much the reason for the halt is passed.

When it happened that we saw a possible chance of a good sketch during one of these stops we would make a dash for it and come back with spoils that could be worked

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up afterwards. Boswell, I found to be quite a dark horse in the sketching line. His notes were excellent and he was quite as keen on these raids as I was. There was some risk of missing the train, losing our baggage, and being held up indefinitely, but happily these things never occurred and I was the gainer by many pictures worked up from notes made under these conditions. At this place, for instance, the town was hidden by buildings round the station, but our "going over the top," brought us to a position along a road upon which some camels were coming from the town and I got some record of it, reproduced opposite. I scribbled it in coloured chalk and washed it over on my return to the train, which we had left for exactly twenty minutes.

On the other side of the line the skeleton of a burnt aeroplane, with its head driven into the ground and its tail high in the air, was a grim reminder of the fighting at this point. The blackened walls of wrecked buildings and the twisted steelwork of trucks in the sidings told their own story.

Damascus must be viewed from a height in order to see the effect of "a pearl set in emeralds" to which it has been compared. From the barren hills on the north one can look down upon the tree-covered plain in the midst of which the city is spread out ; but the best of all is a glimpse from the air. From a plane, not only is the white town surrounded by broad green margins, but it might be described as *argent and vert on a ground sable*, if such an heraldic



BRITISH SEA-PLANE
FLYING OVER DAMASCUS

70 .VIND
ABROGLIAO

arrangement be possible. The desert lies all round it, within a boundary of bare hills. Into this bleached plain flow Pharpar and Abana, the streams from the snows of Lebanon, and wherever they reach the land is as the garden of Eden. Beyond them it is burnt up as though a fire had ravaged it, for the rivers of Damascus lead nowhere, losing themselves and drying up in the desert when their mission of fertilizing the land had been accomplished.

A notable achievement on the part of the R.N.A.S. was the flight of a sea-plane from a ship somewhere off Beirut to Rayak and Damascus to reconnoitre. After it had paid attention to Rayak it flew on still further inland and took photographs of Damascus. Considering that it had to cross two ranges of mountains, the Lebanon and the Ante Lebanon, and that these are snowy heights not offering a dog's chance of a landing, and certainly with no water to come down on, this was a very wonderful achievement. Damascus fell on October 1st, 1918.

"The Desert Mounted Corps,* leaving the Australian Mounted Division at Damascus, moved on Rayak and Zahle on October 5th. No opposition was encountered, and both places were occupied on the following day. At Rayak, the junction of the broad gauge railway from the north, and the meter gauge lines to Beirut and to Damascus and the Hejaz, were found on the aerodrome the remains of thirty aeroplanes which had been burnt by the enemy before he retired. Large quantities of stores and rolling

* General Allenby's Despatch, October 31st, 1918.

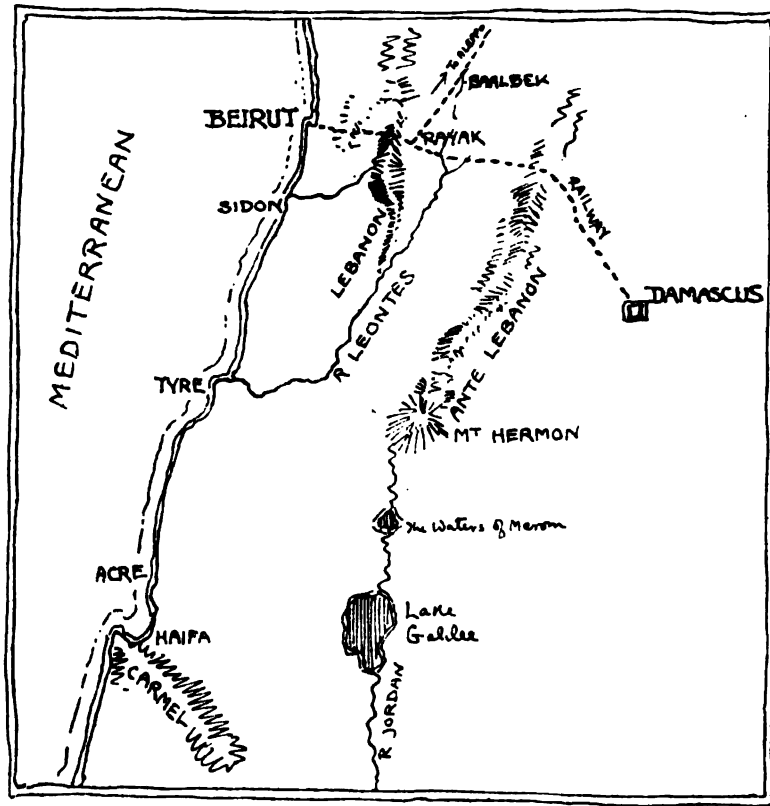
stock were captured, most of the latter in a damaged condition.

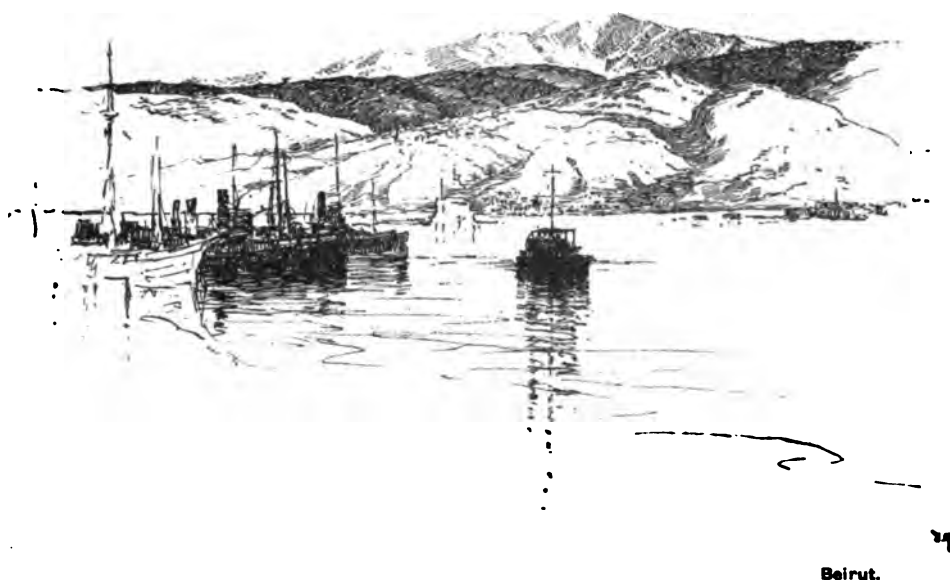
"In the meantime, the 7th (Meerut) Division had marched from Haifa to Beirut. Leaving Haifa on October 3rd, it marched along the coast. Crossing the Ladder of Tyre, it was received by the populace of Tyre and Sidon with enthusiasm. On October 8th it reached Beirut, where it was warmly welcomed, the inhabitants handing over 660 Turks, including 60 officers, who had surrendered to them. Ships of the French Navy had already entered the harbour."





THE GLORY OF LEBANON.





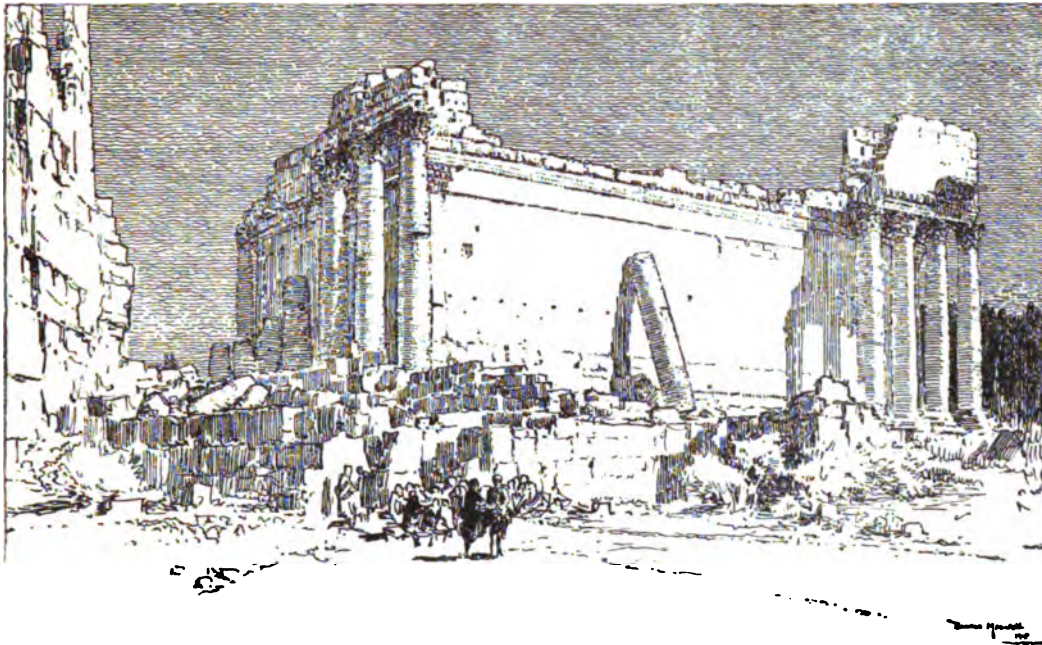
VI.—THE GLORY OF LEBANON

THE journey by train from Damascus to Beirut, was from the point of view of Palestine travelling, exceedingly luxurious. True, there was very little glass in the windows and it was very windy and cold, but we blocked up the worst gaps with trench coats and baggage. It rained incessantly. The distance is about seventy miles and as this was a sort of non-stop express we took only fourteen hours to do the journey. When I say it was a non-stopper, I don't mean to indicate that it did not stop. I mean that it did not stop for hours

shunting about on sidings with no apparent objective. It halted of course at the stations while the engine driver had a chat with the station master and people got out and went for walks to find any friends they had residing in the district and exchange news with them and obtain their opinions on current events. This, however, is not what you call "stopping" in these parts. I have recorded before that it is a point of honour not to proceed again for half-an-hour or so if the train for any reason has been brought to a standstill. I was never able to find out the reason for this.

A chaplain who was travelling in our carriage propounded a theory that it was to give an opportunity to the driver to screw up the nuts on the engine. There was a dearth of spare parts, he said, and the engine could be kept in running condition by very careful nursing and by ingenious and cunning workmanship with bits of wire. On this Lebanon railway, wood is used for fuel as there is no coal, and I think supplies of logs were being collected from the surrounding country at some of the places where we were held up for an unusually long period.

There were a great many travellers of the "seventh" class, natives hanging on outside the carriages. As there were only two trains a week it was considered more desirable to go through this purgatorial form of strap-hanging than to wait from Friday till the following Tuesday. I should certainly prefer to walk. It would take three days instead of one and be far more comfortable. The route



The Temple of Bacchus, Baalbek.

on foot would be much shorter either than road or railway, as both these do a great deal of zig-zagging up and down the hills and short cuts can be made.

Before the war I have travelled in the Lebanon region both on foot and by car. From a landscape point of view it has been of course unaltered by the passage of recent events. Save for a "foreground incident" or two, afforded by the picturesque Australian Light Horse, it might be a haunt of ancient peace, but the villages tell a different tale. The shadow of famine has fallen across them. Except for purposes of army supply the Turks would not allow corn to be imported into the district. Consequently whole villages have been depopulated. As many as 60 or 70 deaths per day were recorded in one little town.

Both railway and road have to cross two ranges of mountains, the Ante Lebanon, of which the snows of Hermon are the summit, and the Lebanon which makes such a magnificent mountain wall as seen with the sea at its base from Beirut. Between these chains flows the river Leonetes running south-west and falling into the Mediterranean between Tyre and Sidon.

In this valley lies Rayak junction between the railway that runs up north to Homs and Aleppo and the line between Beirut and Damascus. It was also an important enemy aerodrome, now a medley of wrecked and burnt sheds, for our air force had reduced it to mince-meat before the Australian cavalry took possession on October 6th.

So rapid had been the advance of our armies in the last



BRITISH DRIFTERS AT BEIRUT

TO MRU
ALBONIA

push, that the enemy intelligence department had not been able to keep pace with it. A German airman flew from Rayak to the next big aerodrome, near Haifa, and landed in the ordinary course of things when he found himself a prisoner. It belonged to the R.A.F.!

Things moved fast. On the night of September 30th, our advance cavalry entered Damascus. A few hours afterwards British troops and the Hedjas Arabs took 7,000 prisoners and the city was surrendered. Within two days the Australians rounded up another 1,500 prisoners N.E. of Damascus and on October 6th, the same day that British and French ships entered Beirut, Rayak was in their hands and by the 9th our armoured cars entered Baalbek and the whole of Syria, south of Homs, was evacuated.

When Homs and Tripoli had been seized little opposition could have been made by the enemy to a march on Aleppo, but we had been going so fast and so far, the problem was who could be sent. "The 5th Cavalry Division and the Armoured Car Batteries were alone available. The Australian Mounted Division at Damascus was over 100 miles distant from Homs, and could not be brought up in time. Time was of importance, and I judged that the 5th Cavalry Division would be strong enough for the purpose."* The advance was most successful, and Aleppo was reached at the same time as the Armistice with Turkey came into force.

The cedars of Lebanon, such as are left of them, are in

* General Allenby, October 31st, 1918.

the hills that make the western wall of the valley of the Leontes. The vicinity of Baalbek is a pleasant place of streams and poplars and the wonderful ruins of warm coloured stone stand out against the blue distance of the hills in telling contrast. The glow of the evening light on the Temple of Bacchus, is one of the most remarkable colour effects I have ever seen. I do not know enough about architecture to describe how the building is constructed, except by drawing it. It has walls without openings, outside which stand pillars. Many of these have fallen down and one is leaning against the wall, broken. The colour of this stone is almost pale orange in sunlight and in the evening still more rich in contrast with the blue sky behind it. The light from this orange coloured wall is reflected into the shadows of the pillars, so that they glow with a flame colour almost as bright as the lighted side. The effect is quite unbelievable.

After we left Rayak, the train began to climb and our progress was extraordinarily slow. It grew colder and colder as we neared the summit of the ridge and the rain turned to snow. Then it grew dark, but we had many hours of weary crawling before us. Boswell, who had appointed himself mess caterer, produced food with great method. As time went on I had begun to get used to some of his peculiarities. One of these was a desire to hoard stores in case one day we should run short. He regarded me with tolerant scorn, as one who belonged to the "eat, drink and be merry" school.



BEIRUT HARBOUR: LOOKING TO-
WARDS THE LEBANON MOUNTAINS

70 1944
AIRBORNE

As time went on, this habit had grown on him. Within reason, caution was wise, but when it ran to investing in a large sack which he filled with all manner of things, necessitating hired bearers, I protested it was going too far. In vain did I purchase tins of biscuits at canteens and attempt little bursts of luxury. Relentless as fate, he put them all into the sack and I was never allowed to look at them again.

However, as we had an enormous amount of waiting about, and spent interminable time in trains, there were some advantages in having a subject of perpetual controversy. Debate after debate raged on this subject of commissariat. Boswell invariably represented me to some imaginary constituents, as one who would bring the whole expedition to swift and irretrievable ruin by gross improvidence, while I, in impassioned periods, asked the meeting to consider the folly of arriving at a camp that was well supplied with canteens, hungry and emaciated and with sufficient provisions to establish a shop.

The general appearance of Beirut harbour, as viewed from the quay by the Customs House, is that of a Swiss lake. Backed by mountains which rise crest upon crest till they reach the snow, the view in evening light when the hills are aflame calls to mind the upper end of Lake Constance by Bregenz. The smooth water of the enclosed harbour partakes of the stillness of a lake and reflects alike the mountain forms and the ships at anchor. The two colour sketches, facing pages 76 and 78 respectively, if

looked at side by side, would give an idea of the prospect, the sketch facing page 76 (showing the drifters) being placed on the left.

You will notice a sunken gunboat in front of the Customs House and in this last sketch you can observe traces of some other sunken vessel just over the hull of the barge on the right of the picture. New arrivals at Beirut are thrilled with this sign (as they imagine) of British or French naval prowess. They very naturally think they are remnants of ships we have knocked out. The small object which shows some rusted rails, evidently part of a bridge, is thought to be the remains of a sunken submarine.

The truth, however, is far less thrilling. These are the relics of vessels sunk by the Italians in the Italian-Turkish war, years before the present conflict. It is a comment on Turkish slackness and indifference. If an enemy of ours sank some gunboats in Sheerness Harbour, can you imagine the Admiralty leaving them there for years after the war was over as a symbol of defeat? I saw them in exactly this position in 1912—one of them right opposite the Customs House and in everybody's way.

Beirut has been bombarded from the sea and bombed by sea-planes from the air. A picture of the aerial bombardment of Beirut harbour—one of a series of "reconstructed" sketches of attack by the R.N.A.S., done for the Imperial War Museum—is reproduced opposite. It was necessarily drawn long after the event. I can claim for it that it attempts to give as accurately as possible what



THE BOMBING OF THE QUAY, BEIRUT,
BY BRITISH SEAPLANES

TO VINO
ALABORLIA?

an eye-witness could have seen at the time. Lest I should either overrate or underrate its truthfulness, I will explain in detail exactly how the subject-matter of the picture was collected—not in this case only, but in all similar efforts to reconstruct after the event.

To begin with, I had numerous photographs taken at the time from the air by the sea-plane observers themselves. These fix certain facts with certainty, such as the light, objects, and buildings actually on fire or being hit, condition of shipping in harbours, rolling stock in railway sidings, etc., during the raid. Many of these photographs have been published from time to time in the illustrated papers, notably those of a raid on Beirut. They are extraordinarily interesting, but more nearly approaching to maps than to pictures.

Armed with these records, I have visited the places, taken note of the time, wind, weather and general conditions at the moment of the event and placed myself in such a position that, had I been there at the time, I should have obtained a good view of the raid. Then I have made the sketch, adding bursting bombs, etc., as shown by evidence in the photographs. By consulting the raiders themselves, whenever I have been able to find them and by "going up" to view effects from the air in the case of those I have drawn as from a plane, I think I have made these records accurate in the main.

No sane person would sit on the quay at Beirut to make this sketch during the raid, had he every opportunity

of being there. This reconstruction of the event is probably as near the truth pictorially as I am likely to get. Frankly, I am not proud of it as art, but I think it is good history.

An Admiral has protested against the amount of smoke I have shown. A photograph taken from above does not seem to warrant so much, but I submit that a lateral view through smoke and dust rising from a quay bulks larger than it would when seen from the air. Luckily I was not ordered, officially, to alter it—forthwith on duty—and so an academic difference of opinion as to the opacity of smoke remains.

Besides the derelict war craft I have mentioned, there are also, in one corner of the harbour at Beirut, some sunken tugs and other boats—I think scuttled by the Turks before they evacuated the port. Thus, in spite of the beauty of its situation and the activities of our shipping, there is a note of desolation and gloom. The British drifters and motor launches gave a homely touch to the scene and the camouflaged food ships unloading into lighters, spoke of better things to come, but even these did not altogether overcome the feeling of hopelessness that had settled down on the beautiful Lebanon port and left its mark.

I was told—unofficially—that an M.L. and a British armed yacht were the first Allied vessels to enter the harbour at Beirut, and they searched round for booby-traps and were of real assistance to the French destroyers that took formal possession soon afterwards. I give the story



SUNKEN CRAFT IN BEIRUT HARBOUR,
NOV., 1918. NOTE THE WIRELESS
AERIALS RIGGED ON THE MOSQUE

*0 VIII
ABISOTIA

for what it is worth as I have no means of verifying it now, but an M.L. is like the proverbial Scotsman at the pole, so I should not be surprised if the tale proves to be true.

On the night I arrived in Beirut I ran into the C.O. of an M.L. He had been for a long time stationed with me in Queenborough. When I say I ran into him I mean it literally, for the streets at night are very dark. I didn't recognize him at first, until he said, "It's a long way from Actæon,"* and then I realized who he was.

"I little thought," he said later, "when I joined the old motor-boat reserve that I should ever cruise in these waters or try to find this channel into Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus."

I think he rather prided himself on the literary touch, but his Biblical allusion revealed a great vagueness of geographical knowledge.

One evening I walked along the quay and noticed for the first time a feature that was indeed eloquent of the downfall of the Turkish Empire. It was a minaret on which was rigged a wireless aerial—a strange mixture of things ancient and modern. The Muezzin still chanted from the Tower that Mahomet was the prophet of God. But Turkey had put her trust in false prophets—the Kaiser, claiming descent from Mahomet, was one! Untrue even to her chosen religion she preached a Holy War with callous insincerity, her tongue in her cheek. And then,

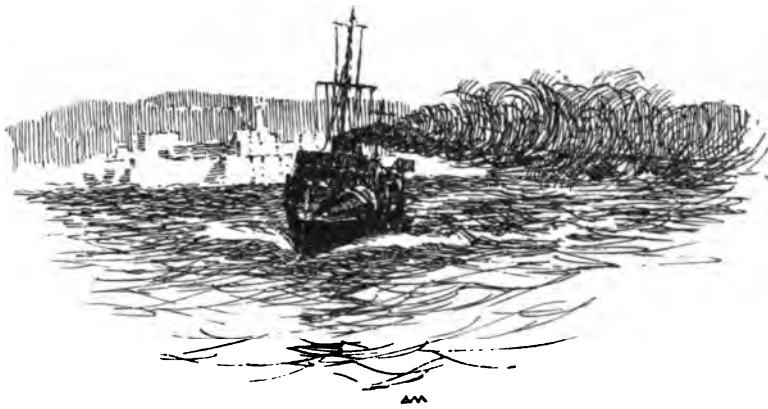
* H.M.S. *Actæon* was the parent ship to the motor launches at Queenborough.

when that failed, invoked science and the German submarine—but it was too late.

“A Muezzin from the Tower of Darkness cries;
‘Fools! Your reward is neither here nor there.’”



Old houses, Beirut.



THE COASTS OF
TYRE AND SIDON.



Tyre.



SIDON

21

VII.—THE COASTS OF TYRE AND SIDON

THE difficulty of making sketches along the coast was considerably increased by bad weather.

When the wind is blowing from the sea there is no shelter between Beirut and Haifa, consequently the discomfort of rolling about at anchor in a small vessel is the order of the day. To make matters worse it is at the same time impossible to land in a boat and get to work under steadier conditions on shore. The alternative of working down the coast road by car offered itself, but as most of my notes would have to be made from the sea we decided to wait for the barometer.

It's an ill wind that blows nobody good, however, even Admiralty official artists, so our consciences were clear and we much enjoyed the vicinity of Beirut. The recent rains

had made the country-side look very fresh, and a dazzling canopy of snow had given a fresh glory to the highest crests of Lebanon.

A few miles above Beirut on the Damascus road, somewhere short of Ain Sofar, we came upon the old Roman aqueduct that crosses a ravine, and in its ruined state among the rich verdure of the gorge made a subject that our forefathers would have called "romantic landscape." A fresh breeze blew in upon the sea, and here, sheltered by sun-warmed rocks, the temperature was perfect. So delightful indeed was the morning, that when we sat down to our *al fresco* lunch even Boswell's meticulous care went to the winds and he opened a tin of biscuits without any prompting from me. He went even farther than this in his expression of goodwill towards everybody in general. He started singing.

Now Boswell sings very rarely. When he does it is a sign that he is in an extraordinarily good humour. Frankly, I do not think he is cut out for the concert platform; I think he himself would admit that some form of plainsong is more his *métier* than grand opera. I have never been able to make out quite what the tune is he sings or what the song is about. It is always the same, something to the effect that he is a desperate fellow and everybody had better look out, and then the word "Mormon" occurs in the midst of tremendous crescendo. I think this is to indicate the climax of his reckless mood, that he doesn't care if he is a Mormon. I like to hear him singing. It augurs well for



PATROL BOATS OFF SIDON

70 .VIVU
AMBORLIA

the amenities of the day when you are with Boswell if you hear anything about Mormons in the morning.

The senior naval officer at Beirut very kindly handed me over a drifter for my own use in sketching down the coast. We were expecting one in from Port Said, fitted up as quite a luxurious yacht, but owing to some delay in docking her or painting her she was some days late in starting, and so, not being out for a picnic but for work, we decided to rough it and go in the one that was available, the *Liberty*. I think she was from Lowestoft. At any rate her cheery skipper hailed from there and we had a very good time.

We planned to be off Sidon at dawn, and so left Beirut about 11 p.m. and steamed down the coast a few miles off shore. We could see the dark masses of the mountains and a ghostly glimmer of snow as we left the harbour, and then, as we plodded on at about seven knots, the land became less interesting and we turned in. I poked my head out of the hatchway when I heard them let go the anchor, but it was still dark. We appeared to be about a mile from land.

When dawn broke, the look-out called us up, and I dressed hurriedly and went on deck, leaving Boswell still considering the pros and cons of getting up at such an unearthly hour on such a cold morning. The breeze was blowing from the land and the rugged sky line of the hills cut into a red-streaked sky on our port beam. Sidon lay ahead of us, beginning to show, for the dawn soon gave

place to the daylight and the sun came up into clear air.

The feature that makes this little town such a delightful prospect from the sea is the contrast between the old Crusaders' castle, joined to the mainland by an arched stone causeway, and the white-washed walls and gleaming minarets of the town which is crowned by an ancient tower on a hill. Some idea of the plan of the town can be seen in the sketch at the head of this chapter. The castle on the right stands on a rocky island and is of mediæval workmanship although much of the material was evidently collected from the ruins of the ancient city. Large stones and pillars can be seen set into the walls, the spoils of some temple belonging to Sidon in her glory, and columns are lying in the shallow water by the causeway that must have lain there for a thousand years at least.

Two motor launches passed us bound for Port Said. They had been patrolling on this coast together with the trawlers and drifters, and were the only ones of all H.M. ships small enough to get into the Tyre and Sidon, once the greatest naval bases in the world.

"Thy borders are in the midst of the sea, thy builders have perfected thy beauty.

"They have made all thy shipboards of fir trees of Senir: they have taken cedars from Lebanon to make masts for thee.

"Of the oaks of Bashan have they made their oars; the company of Ashurites have made thy benches of ivory.



M.L. 248 ENTERING
TYRE AT DAWN

TO: HND
ANGELIAO

"The inhabitants of Zidon and Arvad were thy mariners: thy wise men, O Tyrus, that were in thee, were thy pilots."

To what indignity is Sidon now subjected, to be policed by two M.L.'s? Well may Isaiah exclaim, "Be thou ashamed, O Zidon: for the sea hath spoken, even the strength of the sea."

The first British vessel to enter Tyre was M.L. 248, in fact she was the only one that could *enter*. The other craft trawlers, drifters, food hulks, etc., lay outside at anchor. The army had pushed on from Haifa and was marching up the coast towards Tyre and Sidon and was dependent to a large extent for supplies from the sea. The flotilla arrived off Tyre just at early dawn and anchored. Two mine-sweeping trawlers swept a channel and the M.L. went right into the ancient harbour, feeling her way along by the lead. It is not an easy entrance for an M.L. (which draws six feet) and in some places was only a matter of clearing by inches. All sorts of snags in the way of stones, crumbling masonry, and fragments of columns strewed the channel. When all was arranged with our advance troops on shore the surf boats began the work of unloading the hulks, plying to and fro to the beach. Sidon was victualled in the same manner.

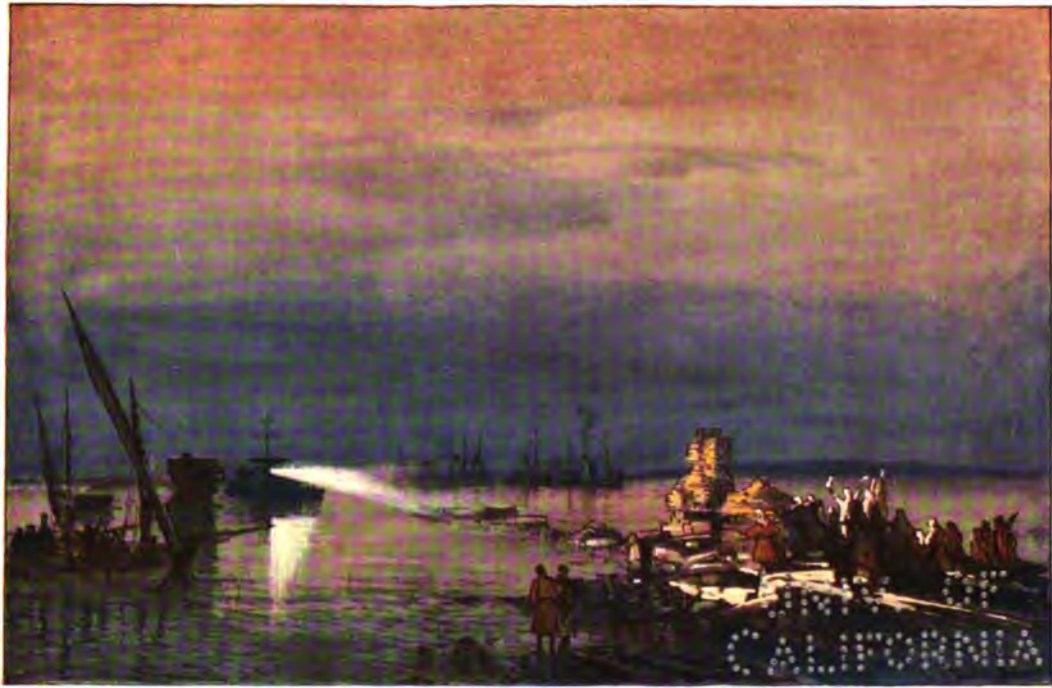
I had a yarn with the commanding officer of M.L. 206 who went into Tyre shortly after this. He was working with a fleet of minesweeping trawlers and drifters and he described a weird and extraordinary sight. Tyre is a miserable place, as seen from the north side, where there is an apology for a harbour. It is in reality the ancient site,

and broken traces of the old mole abound. Jagged fragments of masonry stick out from the water and tumbled masses of columns. A few small fishing boats constitute its shipping. A more desolate scene it would be impossible to imagine—a place for the spreading of nets, her walls shattered, her towers broken down. “How art thou destroyed that was inhabited of seafaring men, the renowned city, that wast strong in the sea?”

Night fell, and the minesweeping fleet came to anchor. In the failing light, while still a dull red light glowed in the upper sky, the M.L. put on her searchlight and started creeping in toward the entrance. On her starboard hand a pile of stones that looked like a ruined tower, on her port hand a low line of debris and fallen pillars ending in a tower-like mass of masonry; ahead, on every accessible fragment of building, hundreds of weird and ragged figures, gesticulating and shouting and making weird movements indicative of astonishment, fear or welcome. The sky line was black with people.

“We felt,” the M.L. officer related, “as though we were dreaming or taking part in some extraordinary pageant. The Dantesque weirdness of the scene belonged rather to the Inferno or to some vision of the prophet Ezekiel than to the world of to-day.” Well might they have exclaimed in the words of Isaiah, “Is this your joyous city, whose antiquity is of ancient days?”

How Tyre fell into the hands of the Crusaders is familiar to many. “When Baldwin was taken prisoner by Balak,



MOTOR LAUNCH ENTERING THE
ANCIENT HARBOUR OF TYRE

to view
attached

the Franks had elected, as guardian for the orphan realm, Eustace Crener, lord of Cæsarea and Sidon. It happened that in 1123 there came to Jaffa a strong Venetian fleet under the doge Domenicho Michaeli. The doge went up to spend Christmas at Jerusalem, and there agreed with the lords of the land to lend his aid for an attack on one of the cities of the coast. Opinion was divided between Ascalon and Tyre, and it was decided to commit the question to the lot. The names of the two towns were written on two strips of parchment, and these were placed on the altar. Then an 'innocent orphan boy' was bidden to take up one of them at random; the lot fell upon Tyre, which city was at once besieged by the combined forces of the Franks and Venetians, under Eustace and the doge. It was to no purpose that Tughtakin came up from Damascus, that a fresh fleet was sent from Egypt, or that the men of Ascalon strove to call off the besieging host by a foray to the very walls of Jerusalem. The last were driven back from the Tower of David; the Venetians defeated the Egyptian fleet; while William de Bures and Pons of Tripoli found the atabek unwilling to abide their onset. All the available forces of the realm seem to have been mustered for the siege, and when it began to flag through lack of military engines, a skilful Armenian engineer was called up from Antioch. At last broken down by hunger and long privation, the city surrendered; men told in later days that only five measures of wheat were found within the walls." *

* "The Crusades," Archer and Kingsford.

When we reached Tyre in the drifter *Liberty* we launched a boat, Boswell and I explored the town, only, however, to confirm the impression of misery and squalor which the outside gave us. A great number of natives followed us at first, but after five minutes' vigorous walking we shook them all off. Our explorations was very uneventful, and after purchasing a few oranges, the only commodity we could find for sale, we re-embarked. For some miles as we steam south, high hills flank the sea, culminating in a steep declivity into which the road is cut. It is known as the Ladder of Tyre. After this point the coast is low and a distant aqueduct standing up from the flat coast country leads the eye to the walls of Acre. Eight minesweeping drifters are operating in these waters and the contrast between the familiar North Sea craft and the city of the Crusaders is a striking one.

From the sea, Acre presents a magnificent appearance, her white houses and slender minarets rising above the strong masonry of her fortified walls, the warm, almost orange coloured, ramparts standing out in bold contrast to the deep blue of the Mediterranean at her feet. Across the bay rises the promontory of Mount Carmel, strong in purple and gold. Her wooded slopes make dark contrast with Haifa, that from here looks like a huge heap of pearls poured out profusely at their base and scattered more thinly up the steep hillside. Between these two extremes, Acre and Cape Carmel, lies the Bay of Acre, into which flows the Kishon, making the sandy shore treacherous and unsafe for travellers



ACRE, EVENING,
STORM RISING

70 1941
ALABAMA

by road. When we landed we found a Red Cross car abandoned and nearly sunk out of sight at one of the fords.

In the evening a very nasty sea began to get up and we deemed it advisable to make for Haifa before nightfall. Mines were numerous in the vicinity and a whole minefield lay somewhere off Cape Carmel, a minefield of which we had at present very scanty information. There were nets also to be negotiated. The floats of these soon appeared and it was not pleasant to find that they were all round us, bobbing about on the short seas and offering, as far as we could discern, no outlet.

The skipper of the *Liberty*, however, had not laid nets for years without knowing a wrinkle or two, and although it seemed a veritable labyrinth we got out before it was dark and found ourselves in the swept channel to Haifa. The sweeping fleet of drifters had just entered to come to anchor. We did the same, and as night deepened and a hundred lights gleamed from the shore, we felt that we had been lying off Yarmouth, but for the great wooded hill towering above us, reminding us that the fisherman of East Anglia was now a Crusader. A distant and ghostly glimmer was still visible at Acre, where many centuries ago their forefathers had rallied round the banners of the Cross.

The East Coast drifter and her big sister the trawler are prosaic-looking craft. We have been familiar with them in peace time grimly fighting their battle with the grey forces of the North Sea. But who, now, when he sights one of these vessels coming in from the fishing grounds, will be able to

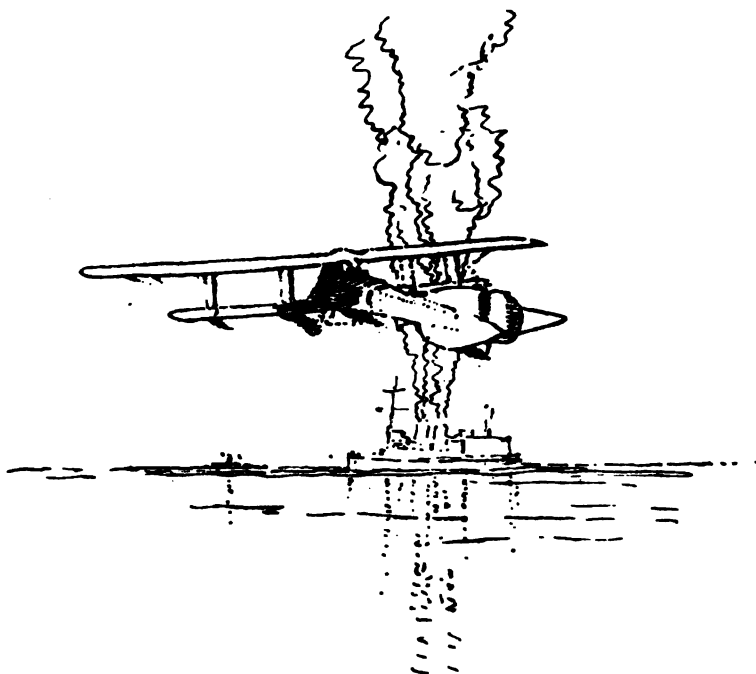
look unmoved at her as she plods sturdily along? Not he who has seen these craft taking most fearful odds in defence of our hearths and homes. Not he who has known their lion-hearted men proceeding calmly, almost indifferently, on their lawful occasions sometimes hardly with a dog's chance if they have to measure swords with enemies a hundred times their strength, alone—as the drifters that engaged a fleet in the Mediterranean.

It is fitting that here, upon the shores of Armageddon, where the tyrant of the East received his death blow, there should have been trawlers and drifters in the offing.

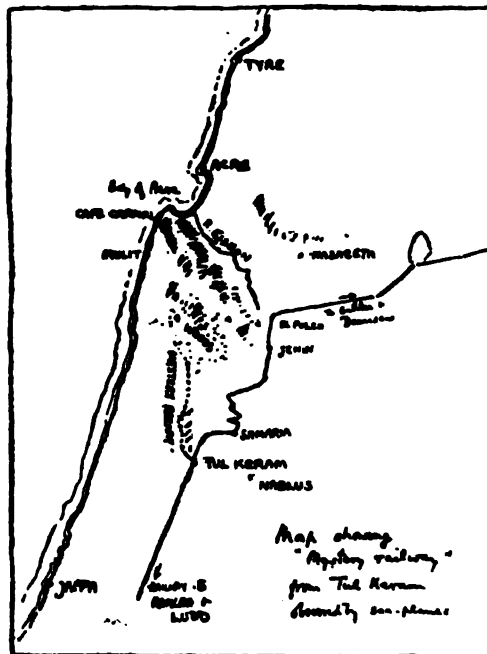


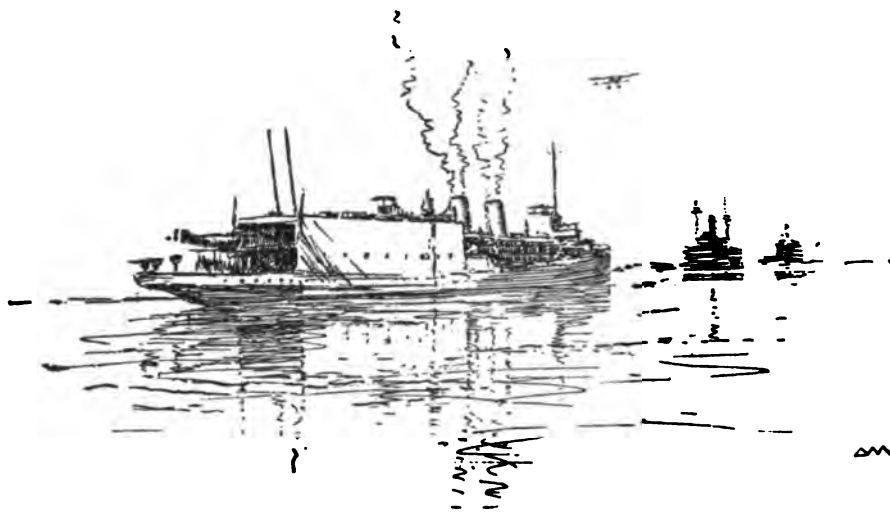
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Drifters off Haifa.



SEA-PLANE SHIPS





VIII.—SEA-PLANE SHIPS

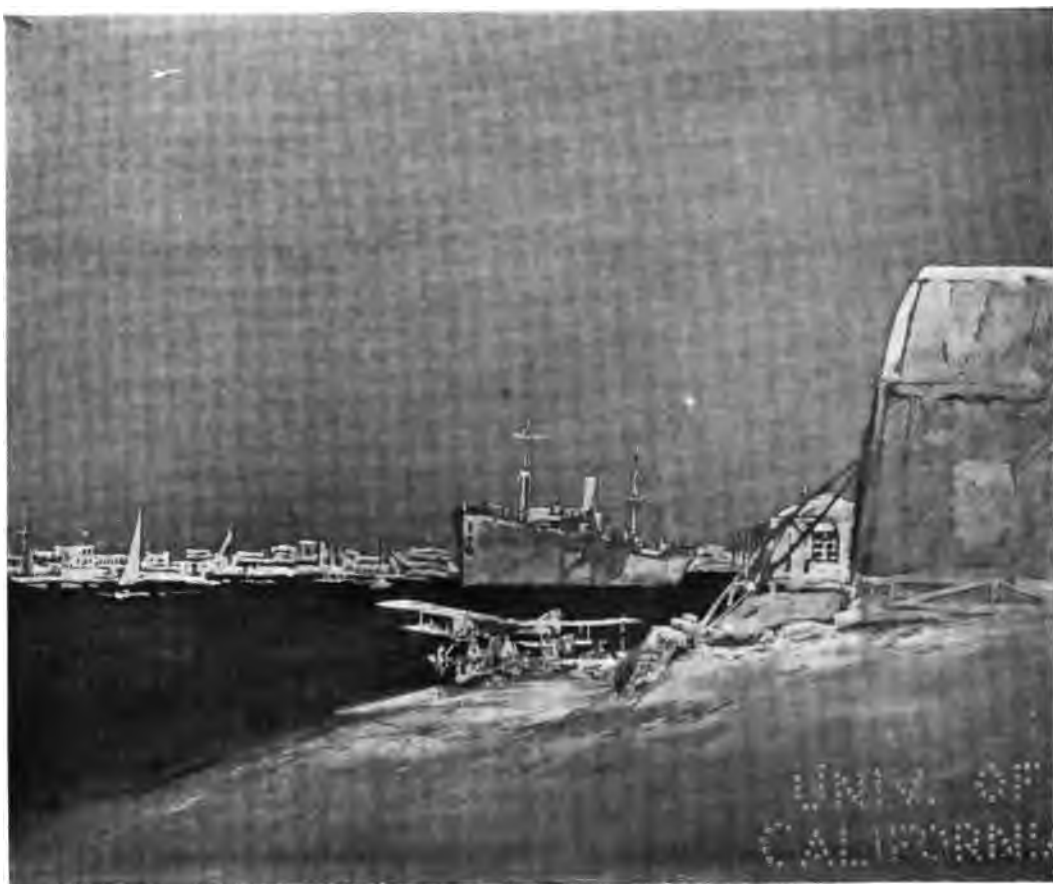
IN the early days of our campaign in Palestine, in fact before we had entered Palestine, when the front was more or less the region of the Suez canal, our principal source of knowledge of the enemy's progress in concentrations and railways was the result of observations by sea-planes.

A small fleet, consisting of vessels specially fitted out for sea-plane carrying, would manœuvre up and down the coast, sending out planes to fly inland and collect the latest intelligence of the enemy's doings. Maps were made and kept up-to-date, so that when we had driven back the Turks and entered Palestine we were equipped with records of railway systems along their lines of supply from the north

that could hardly have been compiled in any other way, photography playing no small part in keeping them up-to-date.

Some of the ships used for sea-plane work looked very much like ordinary merchant ships. The *Raven*, for instance, had been captured from the Germans and re-named. I think it is the *Raven* that is seen in the sketch of Port Said sea-plane station. The more sensational type of ship, however, was the one shown in the sketch on page 99 with a square hangar built on it. At the stern end of this house were cranes for hauling the planes in and out. The appearance of a vessel of this class was weird in the extreme and a novice might be forgiven if he took it, in the distance, for some kind of steam hay-barge. I remember once coming across such a craft in the twilight in the neighbourhood of Taranto. I was in a motor boat and uncertain of my position. The huge super-structure had been camouflaged in fearful and wonderful colours.

At first I thought it was the city of Taranto. Then I mistook it for an island. Then I deemed it to be a sailing ship and then changed my mind and decided on a lighthouse. When I approached near enough to see that it was a gigantic square shape rising from the water I could think of nothing in heaven or earth at all and so settled down to the conviction that it was a picture by Walter Bayes intended to out-do his latest pictorial Bolshevism at the R.A. Then I was challenged and discovered a key to the mystery. It was a sea-plane ship.



SEA-PLANE STATION,
PORT SAID

UNIV OF
CALIFORNIA

Visitors to the Isle of Man may remember the *Ben-my-Chree*. She was fitted out as a sea-plane ship and came to a tragic end in Kastelorizo harbour on the coast of Asia Minor in January of 1917. She was searching for some enemy guns and the first intimation she had of their close proximity was when they opened fire on her from a hidden battery and sank her. All hands made their escape, but one officer and four or five men were wounded.

It must be borne in mind that Palestine was not a front to which the full force of our efforts were being directed in the days of 1916 and 1917. Other fields were for the time better equipped, and as far as the air service was concerned "any old thing" was good enough for us, as one R.N.A.S. pilot put it.

"We didn't get the very latest machines," he said, "to put it mildly, and we had to carry on against great difficulties." Many are the yarns that I heard from sea-plane pilots on the coast of Palestine.

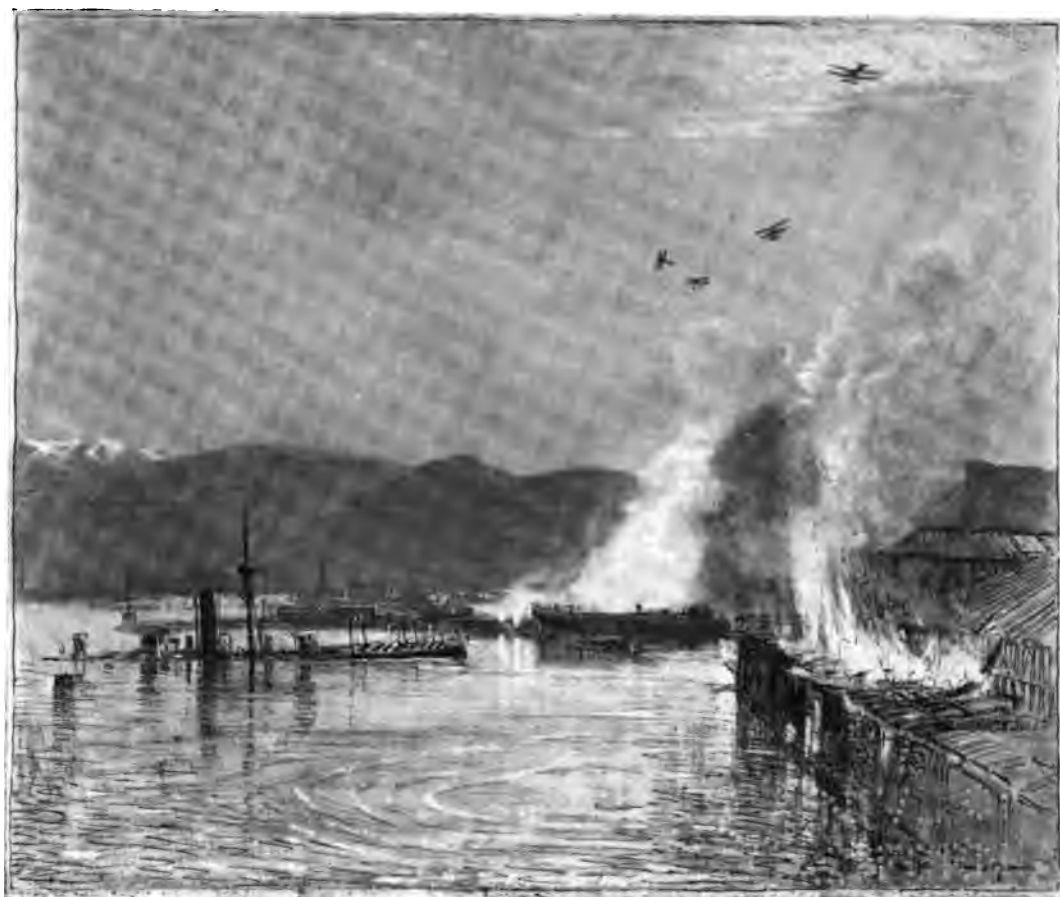
On one occasion, near Mount Carmel, a plane had to descend in the sea and was in great danger of being captured by the enemy. Another sea-plane came to the rescue, however, carried off the distressed pilot on the bonnet of his machine, after having set fire to the damaged plane.

On another occasion a sea-plane flew to Damascus, took photographs and returned in safety. The distance as the crow flies from Damascus to the sea is about fifty miles. However, a much greater distance than this had to be

covered because it was necessary to climb to a great height before reaching the coast, not only to lessen the danger of anti-aircraft fire but to reach sufficient altitude to clear the Lebanon mountains. Two ranges had to be crossed. The chance of finding water on which to descend if anything went wrong with the engines was nil, on the inhospitable precipices of the hills. Thus the achievement was no small one, I suppose the longest inland flight made under any conditions in a sea-plane—not counting of course flights, as in Mesopotamia, where there are rivers or lakes on which to alight.

Some of the reports of sea-plane pilots were received with great reservation at headquarters, especially one which told of a railway line from Tul Keram to a point near the coast on the southern slopes of Mount Carmel. This report came in again and again, but it was considered fanciful, as no useful military purpose could be served by a line to such a point. It led nowhere, not even to the sea coast. In order to show the nature of the country near Tul Keram I have drawn a rough sketch map marking the principal features and the alleged "mystery railway."

The Turks had a narrow gauge line from Ludd to the north through Samaria. This was their main line of supply and we had that all mapped. This alleged new line was a puzzler. When, however, we took that region the sea-plane observer's reputation for accuracy was maintained. There *was* another railway from Tul Keram. It ran up into the wooded region and proved to be a supply line for



**BOMBING THE CUSTOMS HOUSE:
AN ATTACK ON BEIRUT BY
R.N.A.S. SEAPLANES**

TO YOUNG
AND OLD

transporting wood, both for fuel for the railway engines and for other purposes. The fact that it ended so indefinitely in a nondescript and apparently purposeless way was now explained.

A stirring little bombing raid took place at Ramleh on December 23rd, 1916, when two sea-planes attacked the Turkish camp. They were vigorously shelled from anti-aircraft guns and one was brought down (after they had dropped their bombs), the other one returning undamaged to her ship. The pilot and observers of this winged plane were captured,

having managed to descend without serious crashing, between two hills east of Ramleh. In my sketch of the subject you should be able to make out the spot—a place where the light is striking, just behind the spired church where is the tomb of St. George of England. It is



A doorway in Ramleh.

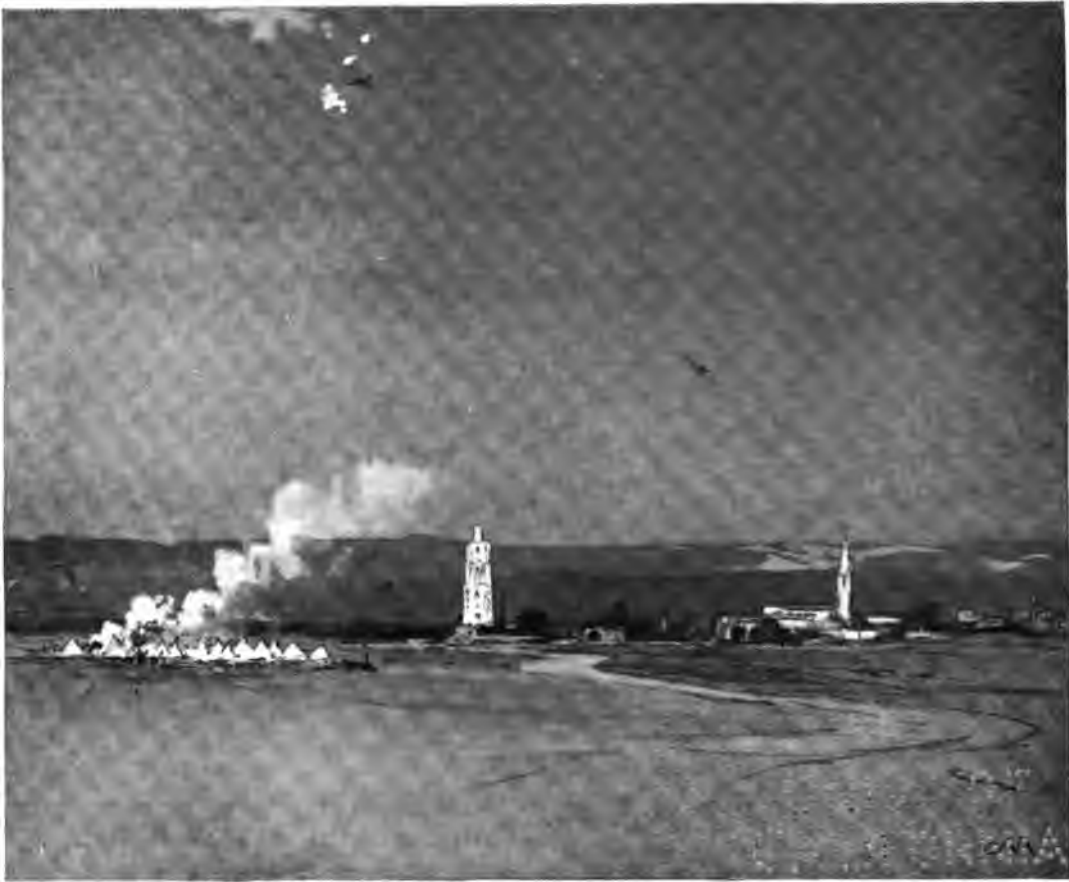
fitting that these modern Crusaders should swoop down on the Turks from the sea, for as R.N.A.S., their flag was the Cross of St. George.

Ramleh and Ludd lie close together and the whole region around was, when I was there, one huge camp or series of camps pleasantly situated on undulating sandy country. History repeats itself, for here was General Headquarters and from here the attack on Jerusalem was planned, as here in the days of the First Crusade the march on Jerusalem was begun eight hundred and eighteen years before.

A council of war was held at Ramleh in 1099, the leaders of the Crusaders being divided into two groups in regard to the plan of campaign to be followed. One party took the line that the true policy was to strike at the head and march on Alexandria and Babylon. [I suppose the Babylon of Egypt is meant, for these optimists with an army of 15,000 knights could hardly have contemplated crossing trackless deserts for 500 miles or so into Mesopotamia.]

The other party maintained with some show of reason that if their forces were insufficient to take Jerusalem, it was nothing but madness to attempt a far more ambitious campaign. The views of this saner party won the day and the march to Jerusalem brought them within sight of the Holy City on June 5th, 1099.

It is interesting to compare the manner of investing Jerusalem that was employed by the first Crusaders and the last.



**"ST. GEORGE FOR ENGLAND!" BRITISH
SEAPLANES BOMBING THE TURKS AT
RAMLEH, THE BURIAL PLACE OF ST. GEORGE**

J. V. WARD
CONNEAUTVILLE, PENNA.
CRAMER CO.
1915

NO MORE
ABSOLUTE

"The Crusaders were too few to encompass Jerusalem entirely; but so far as possible they distributed their forces over the whole circuit. Robert of Normandy camped to the north, by St. Stephen's church, and near him was his namesake from Flanders. Godfrey and Tancred besieged the city from the west, Count Raymond stationed himself on Mount Sion to the south. Eastward, by Mount Olivet, the Crusaders kept no watch; for the city was impregnable on that side, where the strong walls of the Temple enclosure rose abruptly from the deep valley of Jehoshaphat."

On June 14th the first attempt was made on Jerusalem. "Without siege instruments, with only one ladder, and trusting to mere weight, the Crusaders made a desperate assault upon the walls. Some succeeded in reaching the summit, and the very rashness of their attack struck terror for a moment into their enemies. But the garrison soon rallied, and the invaders were all driven back or hurled from the ramparts. The task, it was manifest, must be undertaken in a more formal manner. Siege engines must be made."

Hunger and thirst nearly brought the besieging army disaster during this period of preparation, when the joyful news came that nine ships had put into Jaffa with stores. These vessels fell into the hands of the enemy, all except one which escaped to the north, but the stores were brought up to the camp outside Jerusalem and the crews of the ships set to work with timber from the forests of Shechem and made effective siege engines—sea power and the handy man as usual!

Lector.—I suppose you can't keep the Navy out of it any more than Mr. Dick could keep King Charles's head out of the Memorial?

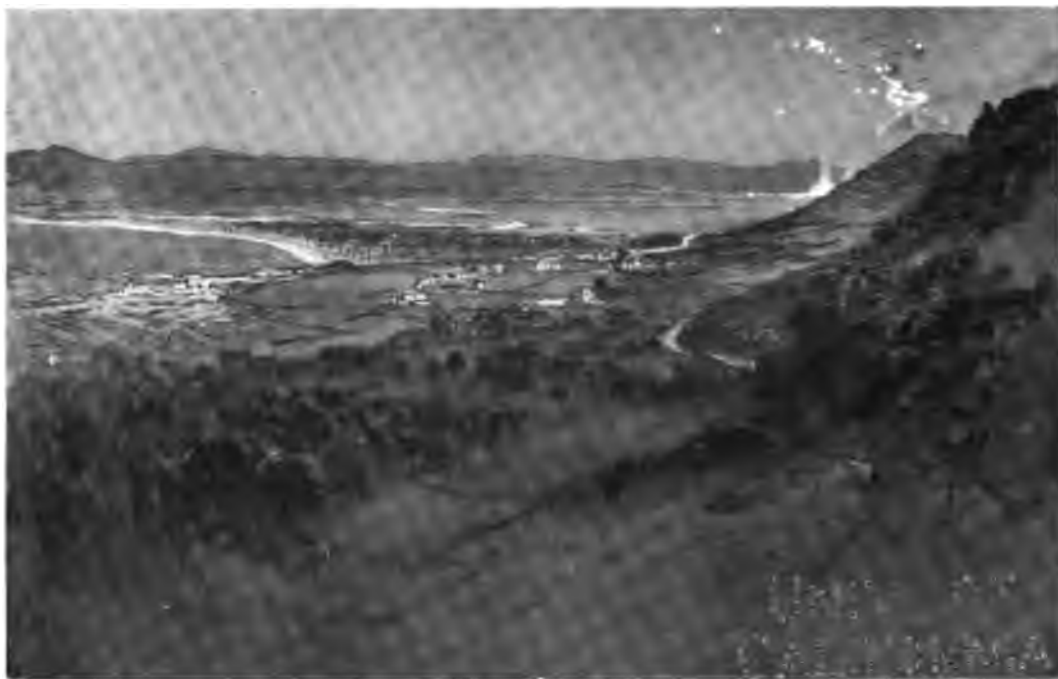
Pictor.—Certainly not. The Navy is in it all the time. Such measure of success that the Crusaders had depended to a very large extent on their control of the sea. Had the Saracens realized the importance of sea power they could have upset the Crusaders much sooner than they did.

Lector.—That is true, but your exclamation "sea power and the handy man *as usual*" seems to imply that the Navy had a hand in the conquest of Palestine last year.

Pictor.—Of course it did! Have you not heard the story of General Allenby and the boatswain in charge of the Dead Sea fleet? Keep quiet now, and I will tell it you later on.

When General Allenby advanced on Jerusalem on December 4th, 1917, Welsh troops with a cavalry regiment attached approached the city from a point north of Beersheba on the Hebron-Jerusalem road. On the 7th they were in a position about three miles south of Jerusalem. They halted there to wait for movements of other troops to be effected.

Then the weather broke up and rain made observation from the air impossible to the enemy and the roads almost impassable for us. In spite of very heavy travelling, however, troops moved by night and at noon on December 8th London troops were astride the road from Jerusalem to Shechem in the N.E. Thus the Holy City was cut off on



THE PLAIN OF ESDRAELON AND THE RIVER
KISHON FROM THE SLOPES OF MOUNT CARMEL:
AIR FIGHT IN PROGRESS OVER EL AFULE

TO WHOM
IT MAY COME

both sides. On the 9th Jerusalem was ours. On the 11th General Allenby made his formal entry.

During all this period the command of the sea was everything. Even if we regard Egypt as a base independent of Great Britain for supplies of war material and men, the advance would have been a very slow one if it had depended on the railway line from Kantara. The first aerial reconnaissances resulted from our command of the sea and the rapidity of the last great push was consequent upon supplies coming quickly from the coast. Jaffa was ours on October 16th and continuous convoys of food ships and store ships kept up the place. There are no harbours for anything larger than a pulling boat south of Haifa. Companies of workmen of the Egyptian Labour Corps unloaded the ships into surf boats. In some cases vessels had to be run ashore and sacrificed rather than wait for suitable weather.

There is an interesting parallel between Richard the First's campaign in the third crusade and in Allenby's taking of Palestine. The former was marching from north to south along the coast, the fleet moving down with them at a little distance from the shore and keeping the army supplied with stores. The latter marched from south to north with the navy moving up with him and maintaining his commissariat during his lightning advance in the last great push.

This was no easy job with submarines about and the loss of a destroyer and a monitor on November 14th, 1917,

was an unpleasant reminder of the difficulty of patrolling the coast. An ingenious harbour or preserve formed by floating nets was devised. Without this our naval losses would have been much heavier.

Just as in the first, Crusaders were indebted to seamen in solving the problem of the siege of Jerusalem, so General Allenby was grateful to the long arm of the Navy for divers in sinking piers for bridges and for assistance, not without its humorous side, in the far-off country by Jericho and the region beyond Jordan.



Monitors off Gaza.



THE GATES OF CAZA





"Burnt Tank," Gaza.

IX.—THE GATES OF GAZA

THE complete absence of anything in the nature of a harbour in the south of Palestine rather interfered with my schemes for sketching in the region of Gaza. It would not be possible to land anywhere in a boat did we encounter rough weather and the nearest shelter in Haifa. Under these circumstances much progress in painting would be unlikely.

The barometer was very unsteady and we temporarily gave up the idea of cruising. Consequently we found ourselves pursuing our way down the coast on camels, Boswell philosophically remarking that a ship of the desert was better than no ship at all, but that both were apt to be rather bumpy at times.

About four miles from Gaza to the south and about two miles from the sea, we discovered a tank. It is marked on the map already as Burnt Tank. Knocked out in the fighting in our advance on the town, the Turks had made

it into a fort. A large naval projectile was found in the vicinity, so it was evidently strafed from the sea as well as from the land and this part must have been a pretty hot corner. Remains of paint, notably yellow at each end, show her old protective colouring, which evidently did not do much to protect her. She was a mass of rust and twisted steel.

From this point is a comprehensive view of sea and land. We dismounted—I don't know if that's the right term for the uncomfortable process of getting off a camel—and had lunch. The tank made a splendid dining-room and Boswell was in great form singing at the top of his voice about being a Mormon and giving fair warning to all and sundry that he was about. The camels looked mildly astonished at the outburst in that supercilious manner peculiar to camels, but I hailed the symptoms with delight, knowing that it would be quite safe to suggest opening a tin of biscuits or producing some luxury without several hours' controversy on the subject of war economy.

Lector.—I should like to hear Boswell's side of this much discussed subject.

Pictor.—I believe Boswell is writing a book, too, and no doubt the general public will be much edified, if not shocked, at his spirited *exposé* of my besetting sins. It is, in fact, an instinctive feeling that he is not going to spare me that makes me attack first. The small dog generally growls first when the big dog approaches.

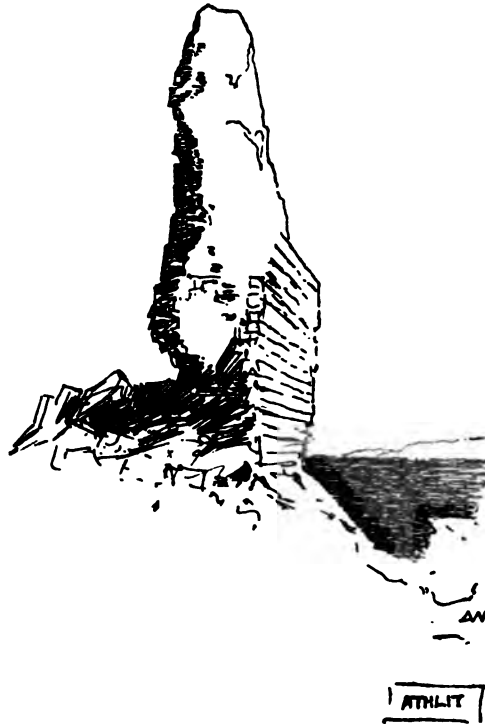
Returning to the town, we sent our camels back to the



MONITOR 31 BOMBARDING TURKISH
POSITIONS NEAR GAZA AT DAWN

70 VINI
ALGERIA

camp and explored the streets. Certain localities that had been of military importance were knocked to pieces, but other parts had been damaged very little or had been repaired. At the best of times some of these mud buildings are such ruinous and tumble-down places that it is difficult to tell if they have been bombarded or got like that by neglect. If a building made of sun-dried bricks be merely holed it is very easy to patch it up again, and the poorer classes seemed to be living in these partly damaged houses with their characteristic squalor, very much as if nothing had happened.



Like so many things in the East, some of these mud-walled houses look quite imposing at a distance. For instance, the picturesque buildings along the ridge in the sketch on page 109 might be the well-nigh impregnable ramparts of an ancient city. It is not until you come close to them and find that they are of most miserable and slipshod workmanship that you realize what the bright sunshine,

lifting them out into the sky, has done for them in the way of idealization.

The other sketch I made this same evening was taken from the slopes close by. It shows where the railway runs through the town—incidentally I noticed the goods train passing through had a North-Western engine—at a point where considerable damage had been done by shell-fire.

When General Allenby took over the command in Palestine at the end of June in 1917 he found Gaza "a strong fortress heavily entrenched and wired." The Turks held a front from the sea to Beersheba along the Gaza-Beersheba road for a distance of about thirty miles, and he deemed that the capture of Beersheba would be necessary as a preliminary to any successful advance on account of the fact that good supplies of water could be obtained there for a certainty.

Naval forces co-operating bombarded the Gaza positions, the railway station and the depôts to the north of the town.

Supplies came through the railway from Kantara and although a great strain was thrown upon it, such was the skill with which transport was managed that it sufficed for the army's needs at this period. However, the rapid push that broke up the Turks and ended the war in Palestine could not have been accomplished without command of the coast. Ships were run in and supplies got to our forces on the march in sufficient quantities and quickly enough to keep pace with the rapid march of events.

The final bombardment of Gaza began on October 27th



ANOTHER SAMSON AT
THE GATES OF GAZA

TO VINI
AMPORTLIAO

and went on for some days. On the 31st London troops and yeomanry took the Turks by surprise and a charge by the Australian Light Horse completed the work in one section, but Gaza still held out. On the morning of November 2nd a general attack on Gaza was



Ruins at Athlit.

ordered. Thirteen guns were captured and 2,000 prisoners. Still the town had not fallen. An alarming shortage of water had held things up. An attack was planned for the nights of 6th and 7th, East Anglian troops, fittingly employed, for they might have been advancing along the sandy shores of their native coast, discovered on advancing that the Turks had left their trenches and retired. Thus Gaza was occupied and our mounted troops pushed on, some to Ramleh and Ludd and some to Jaffa, which was occupied on the 16th. Nine days after the fall of Gaza we had advanced forty miles. The railway was being pushed forward and a new era had started, for supplies were being landed from the sea by ships convoyed from Egypt.

The picture facing p. 114 entitled "Another Samson at the Gates of Gaza," may need some explanation. I do not suppose some details of the sketch will be decipherable by the time it has been reduced in size. However, I expect you will be able to discern some sort of aircraft high in the

sky in the midst of bursting shells. This is Wing Commander C. R. Samson, R.N.A.S., D.S.O. (now Colonel Samson, R.A.F.) annoying the Turks at Gaza in flight from a sea-plane ship, in the days when we had got nowhere near it on land.

The weather had moderated during our stay in Gaza, and giving Boswell a short holiday I found the drifter *Liberty* again, and cruised up the coast in search of Athlit, a ruined stronghold of the Crusaders. I was told by everyone I met that I must go to Athlit as it was just the place for sketches. As it happened, two destroyers made a landing there to cut telegraph wires during the last great push, so that was quite sufficient excuse for a journey of exploration on behalf of the Admiralty.

I was not disappointed. The ruins, jutting out to the north of a little sandy bay are delightfully situated on a piece of coast backed by wooded hills. The skipper of the drifter sent me ashore in the boat with a couple of hands. I made due notes of the scene of the landing for future reference, and then proceeded to explore the labyrinth of stone.

One fragment of a huge tower remains standing—a curious pinnacle of crumbled stone with one post still showing the dressed masonry. The other buildings are massive but low. Down by the water's edge on the western extremity of the promontory stand great arches and one mountain of debris on which a single fallen pillar rests in a complete hall within, with groined roof and well preserved



British Monitors off the Coast of Palestine.

stone work. It is amazing to find Arab families living squalidly like a colony of rabbits in odd holes and corners of this wonderful little world of ruins when there is this magnificent banqueting hall to be had for the asking.

Perhaps there is some reason not easily apparent that keeps them away. Do they fear strange apparitions in chain armour, shades of the Knights Templars or the tall grim figure of Baldwin du Bourg looking down upon them from the sea-girt ramparts? Perhaps, when the moon is veiled with flying clouds and the sea wind is shrieking through the ribbed arches in the surf, someone has looked into this banqueting hall and seen things of which he speaks with bated breath, so that no man dare venture there at night any more.

We left Athlit in the evening and timed to get into Haifa before sunset. The voyage will give me time to tell you the story of General Allenby and the boatswain. The incident related took place on the shores of the Dead Sea, that remarkable piece of water deep down in a cleft 1,300 feet below the level of the Mediterranean. The Turks had some boats on its waters, and General Allenby applied to the Navy for some sort of craft to use against them if necessary. It was finally arranged that the Navy should supply the boats, send them in charge of an officer and a few men, and the Army should man them. The amazing journey of two whalers on trolleys, pulled by a caterpillar tractor *via* Jerusalem and thence down the Jericho road to the Jordan valley, is one of the strangest happenings of the



GAZA, NOV. 1918

To WHI
JANUARY

1



Ruins of the Crusaders' stronghold at Athlith.

war. During my stay in Egypt I ran across a naval man—Lieutenant Kent—who could boast that he had been “S.N.O., Dead Sea.” It appears that the General was down by the Dead Sea when he observed that the two whalers had arrived, were in the water, and getting somewhat banged about on a lee shore. Apparently the full naval force consisted of two men, as these boats were to be manned by the Army. Only one man appeared to be about, and the General asked him why on earth he did not muster the other man to save the boats from being damaged. The boatswain, saluting in rather a perfunctory way to a mere land-lubber although it were the General in command, replied, “It’s no use starting anything yet, sir. I’m waiting for the ebb.” I cannot vouch for the accuracy of the story, but I give it as it was related to me. If it is true it is not very creditable to the British Navy, and therefore I feel in honour bound to recount another yarn of the same region—the Dead Sea—which, if true, does not give

very great glory to the intelligence of the Army. Then we shall be quits.

Some boats had been scuttled by the Turks, and the Army had applied to the Navy for divers to set about raising them again. Enquiries were made by the Naval authorities by telephone as to the position of the wrecks, as the Dead Sea covers a very large area, and is some 1,300 feet deep in places. The reply was refreshingly frank, "We don't know at all. That is why we want the divers!"

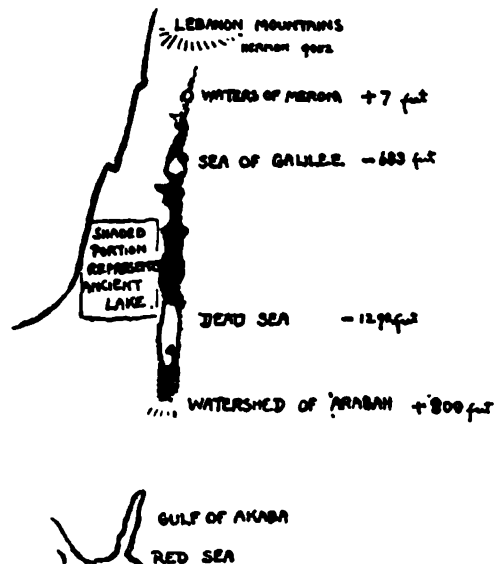


Diagram to show the levels in Jordan valley and Dead Sea cleft. Probably this was once an arm of the sea, stretching up from the Gulf of Akaba.

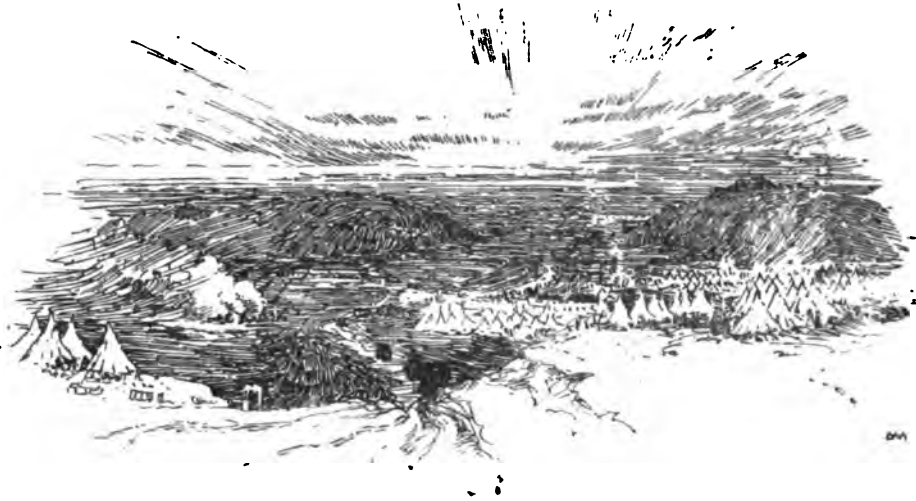


ARMAGEDDON



٨٧

A Syrian Village.



X.—ARMAGEDDON

IF there have been two words more abused by Fleet Street than any others in the description of great doings, they are in peace time *Pageant* and in war time *Armageddon*. A number of warships steaming into Southend, however impressive, is not a pageant. Even the great Victory March through London, epoch-making as it was, could not be rightly called a pageant, although every newspaper in London, and probably in England, described it as such in telling and alliterative headlines.

In a similar manner poor Armageddon has been trotted out and used wrongly on every occasion where something in modern war unusually terrible or incredibly diabolical has roused the popular imagination. The average man has

merely a vague idea that Armageddon is mentioned in the Bible as the last great battle, a titanic struggle between the nations of the earth at the end of the world.

It is surprising how very slight is the average man's knowledge of classic Old Testament stories. One would suppose he had gathered them entirely from hearsay and never had any opportunity of seeing the Bible in print. I have known many men who would be quite shocked if you doubted their knowledge of the Scriptures, who confidently believe that the book of Genesis asserts that Eve ate an apple or that the book of Jonah reports the disobedient prophet to have been swallowed by a whale. Nearly everyone remembers the story of the Ark as telling of the animals entering two by two, male and female of each kind. Whereas they were grouped in sevens except the unclean beasts, which were mustered two at a time. What wonder, then, that the man in the street thinks of Armageddon in somewhat vague terms and is not quite sure where it comes in.

I might relate here that the paragraph above, written with malice aforethought, brought me the crop of indignant letters I had expected to receive when it was published in a magazine. Some of my correspondents proved with great elaboration and quoting of texts that Eve ate of a *fruit* and that the whale must have *swallowed* Jonah because the Bible says he was three days and three nights "in the belly of the fish." One good man abused me roundly and then worked himself into great indignation. "I put it to you," he wrote, "that the prophet was in the belly of the fish."

How, I ask, could he have found himself in that uncomfortable and unfortunate position unless the whale had swallowed him?" I think he thought I was an atheist and perverter of Holy Scripture. As a matter of fact, as you can see, I expressed no views on the nature of the stories, and did not say whether I took them as historical or allegorical. I merely said that the book of Genesis does not speak of Eve eating an *apple* or the book of Jonah tell of the prophet as swallowed up by a *whale*.

I am writing this in the wilds and have not any books for verification, but I believe I am right in saying that Armageddon comes from two Hebrew words and means the hill of Megiddo, Megiddo being a city that overlooked the plain of Esdraelon from the lower slopes of the Carmel ridge. Thus the hill of Megiddo gives the name to the great natural arena in which the Jews met their enemies in mortal combat.

In the midst of a hilly and "difficult" country, it is the only large open plain in which a pitched battle would be possible. It was here that the stars fought in their courses against Sisera, when that great enemy of Israel with all his host was routed and swallowed up in the marshes of the Kishon, the Kishon that ancient river. It is a battlefield of battlefields, and, as such, St. John pictures the nations of the earth assembled to do battle. Armageddon is a real place, but used here in a symbolic sense as we use the battlefield of Waterloo as a symbol of decision. We talk about a man coming to his Waterloo.

St. John in the Revelation (ch. xvi.) pictures unclean spirits "like frogs" coming out of the mouth of the dragon and of the beast and of the false prophet. (Popular current interpretation no doubt fixes on the beast as the Kaiser, if not on Mahomet as the false prophet.)

"For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles" (Zeppelins and the long-range gun!) "which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, and gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."

"And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon." There is nothing written of a battle or of anything particularly fearful. It is the place where all the hosts were encamped before the last great struggle.

This much for the Armageddon as a symbol of the last great battle at the end of the world. What of the place—the plain of Esdraelon and how it figured in the last great battle at the end of the Palestine campaign, where the power of the Turk was finally and utterly broken? Although the rout continued for some time, the Turkish Empire had practically ceased to be as a military factor. By noon on October 31st the Armistice with Turkey came into force. Thus Armageddon, even in its local sense, signalled the downfall of our enemies in so remarkable a manner that it is surprising that the sequence of events did not take hold of the popular imagination at the time.

Things happened so quickly and over so large an area that it is only now that it is all over that we can get an

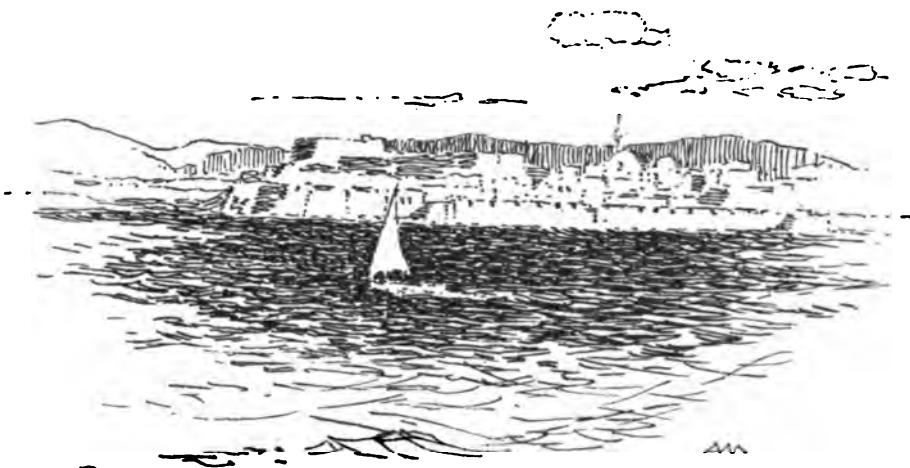


EL AFULE: LOOKING TOWARDS THE
HILL OF MEGIDDO (*i.e.* ARMAGEDDON)

NO VINYL
ANALOGUE

adequate idea of the part that General Allenby's brilliant strategy played in the march of events.

By glancing at the map you can see how the plain of Esdraelon lies between the hills of Nazareth on one side and Carmel and the hills of Samaria on the other. El Afule is almost in the centre of the open, and this place, a junction bombed and harassed by our airmen long before



Acre from the West.

we were able to get anywhere near it on land, was with Beisan in the valley of Jezreel the most vital point in the enemy's communications, and both could be reached by cavalry when a way had been broken through for them by the infantry—a difficult task indeed, but one that was accomplished with great daring and success.

The evening of September 18th was the eve of Armageddon. An awful stillness reigned through the whole

front—the calm before the storm. The concentration of troops on the coastal plain, carried out principally by night, and, as it proved, without the enemy's knowledge, was complete. The groves of Ludd and Ramleh and of Jaffa had done their work in concealing them during the day. Our airmen had seen to it that the enemy had been "blinded" by almost complete extermination of his aircraft, only four planes attempting to cross our lines during this period.

In order to direct the enemy's attention from the great stroke that was contemplated on the coastal plain, demonstrations were made near Amman, across the Jordan. General Chaytor, with his Australian and New Zealand cavalry, an Indian Infantry brigade, battalions of Royal Fusiliers and West Indies regiment, succeeded in making the Turks believe that a big attack was imminent, and during that period skilfully extricated two cavalry divisions and sent them to the coast without the enemy being any the wiser.

Two days before this the enemy's communications at Deraa were attacked by the Royal Air Force, and the Arabs, our allies from the Hedjaz, attacked and demolished the railway to the south. On the next day they destroyed sections of line to the north and west, so that all through traffic to Palestine ceased and the Turks, should a successful attack be made on them from the south, would be in a very serious position with regard to line of supply from their northern bases.

At dawn on September 19th the great battle began.



HAIFA AND THE BAY OF
ACRE FROM MOUNT CARMEL

NO 1781
AMMPLIAO

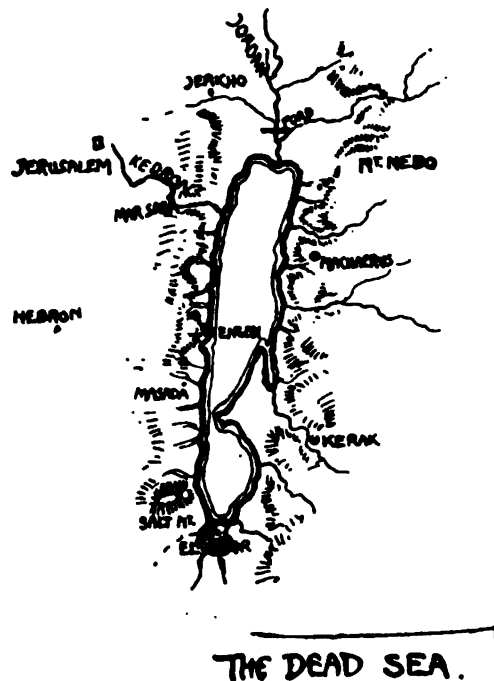
Swarms of aircraft attacked the Turkish VIIth army at Nablus and the VIIIth army at Tul Keram, thus shattering their signal communications. At half-past four a furious bombardment was started by our artillery on the coastal plain and from the sea barked out the guns of destroyers harassing the coastal road to the north.

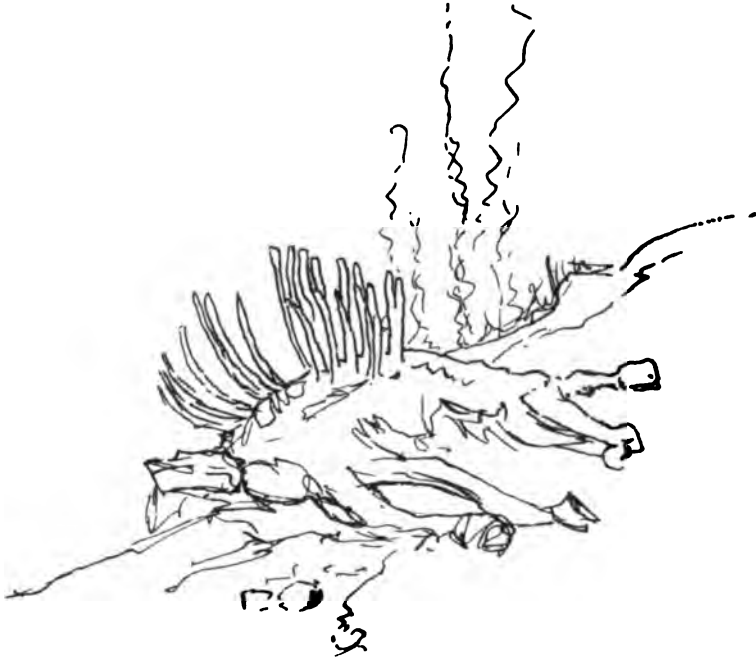
By five o'clock on September 20th the VIIIth Turkish army had been routed and scattered in disorderly retreat through the hills of Samaria with our infantry relentlessly dogging their heels and driving them into our cavalry, which had broken through and spread themselves across the plain watching the openings of the hill paths.

The sketch facing p. 106 shows the plain of Esdraelon from the slopes of Mount Carmel above Haifa. The incident is an attack on El Afule by sea-planes.

These sketches were made in December, 1918, the one being a reconstruction of an event that happened years previously from the material at hand, the other is a note done from the train when shunting into siding at El Afule. It shows the inevitable motor lorry creating an all-pervading dust. In the distant ridge of hills on the extreme right of the sketch can be seen the site of the ancient Megiddo, or rather the faint blue distant high ground is the "hill of Megiddo," which gives its name to this battleground, Armageddon. El Afule in this light looked quite imposing and picturesque, but it is in reality a heap of mud. Note the gang of the Egyptian Labour Corps squatting on the ground and their taskmaster in black

standing by. The length of time we were kept pottering about at various stations en route between different camps in Palestine had one advantage to weigh against its many drawbacks. I was enabled to get a good many subjects into my sketch book that have since turned out to be quite valuable data.



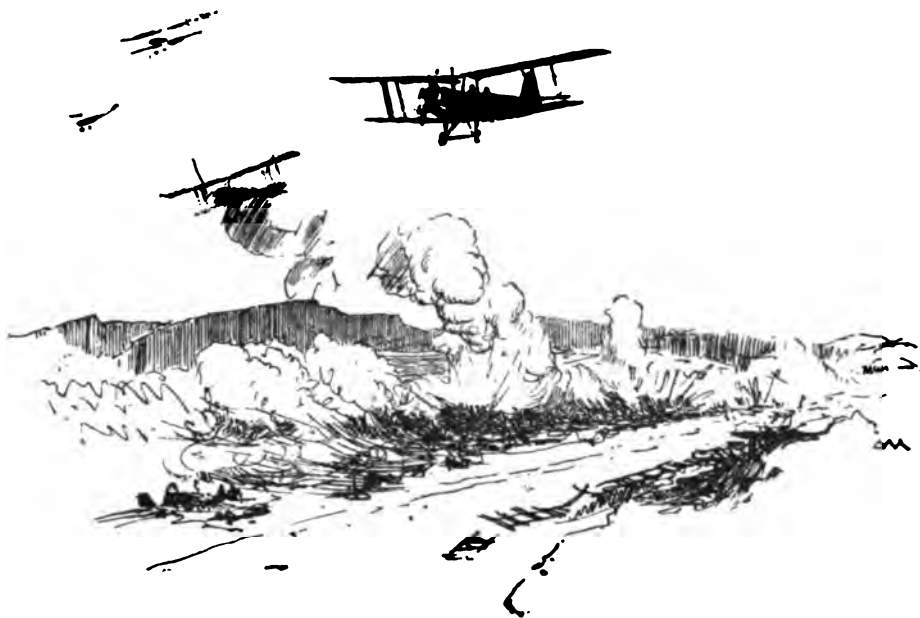


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THE VALLEY OF DEATH



Wreck of Turkish line
at Deri Seneid.



XI.—THE VALLEY OF DEATH

ON September 19th, the day of decision, before the sun had risen long on Tul Keram, the fate of the Turkish army was foreshadowed. Their left on the fringe of hills that bounded the coastal plain, the dashing and spirited advance of the French Tirailleurs and the Armenians of the Légion d'Orient had swept everything before it. On their right the 54th Division was storming Kefr Kasim. By noon bodies of Turks had broken up and were in full flight towards Tul Keram, hard pressed by the Australian Light Horse, and every man knew that the day was lost. At Tul Keram pandemonium

reigned. Disorganized bodies of troops, masses of transport wagons, guns, lorries in unutterable confusion, were pressing forward on the road to Messudie and Nablus. Some of the troops had thrown away their arms in the mad rush for safety. The railway and the road run side by side through a narrow valley flanked on both sides by steep and rocky hills. Through this streamed the flying and broken army doomed to disaster, without respite and without hope, only as yet dimly able to imagine the horrors in store for it. They knew little of what lay before them. They knew nothing of our cavalry mustering at El Afule and Beisan, but they knew what lay behind them. For two days the rout continued. They fled every man in terror of the winged scourge that darted from the sky and hurled destruction and death upon their broken ranks.

And there came out of the smoke flying things upon the earth : and they were given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

And they had breastplates as it were breastplates of iron ; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots, of many horses running to battle.

One woe is past and there come more woes hereafter. Nazareth is taken and El Afule, and horsemen thunder down the valley of Jezreel by Gilboa to Bethshan. No hope is left and all roads are utterly cut off. Death and destruction rain upon them from the heavens. For now is their hour come and they shall be utterly destroyed. They shall seek death and not find it.



THE FEAST

*"To all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven:
Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper
of the great God;
That ye may eat the flesh of Kings, and the flesh of
captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh
of horses."*

70 VINU
ABROPHILA

Drivers leave their waggons, riderless horses jostle each other in the mêlée, and the valley is filled with blood and with the cries of the dying. The horse and his rider are hurled to destruction, but the avenger of blood strikes without pity from the heights. Again he returns yet again.

Rejoice, ye daughters of Armenia, for now is your dishonour avenged. Shout and be glad, ye men of the Cross, for your oppressor is laid low and your tormentor has bitten the dust. The men of the air have avenged your blood.

A fire devoureth before them ; and behind them a flame burneth ; the land is as the garden of Eden before them ; and behind them a desolate wilderness ; yea and nothing shall escape them.

Like the noise of chariots on the tops of the mountains shall they leap, like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble, as a strong people set in battle array.

The valley of slaughter had become the valley of death. Dreadful shapes were patterned upon the ground and frightful markings stained the scarred ramparts of the gorges. The sinister forms of great birds gathered in the sky and settled eagerly upon the dark and almost shapeless heaps, and I seem to hear the voice crying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of the heaven :

Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God ;

That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of

captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses.

When night fell no sound broke the stillness in these awful ravines save only an intermittent scrambling noise—the noise of the vultures at their dreadful work.

Thus with violence ended the corruption of the Turkish rule in Palestine.

* * * * *

The fates had decided, but the work of occupation and the collecting of straggling prisoners went on. The whole of the VIIth and VIIIth Turkish armies which had survived this slaughter in the valleys by scattering and taking to mountain paths were captured and all that was left of their transport and guns. Haifa and Acre were occupied and the country to the south and west of the sea of Galilee. General Chaytor's force captured Amman and cut off the retreat of the Turkish forces at Maan, which surrendered. General Chaytor remained at Amman and on September 28th cut off the Turkish forces to the south. The Turkish commander surrendered with 5,000 men.

The road was now open to Damascus. The Desert Mounted Corps advanced in two columns, one by way of the sea of Galilee and Deraa and the other by El Kuneitra. There was some vigorous rearguard fighting by the Turks at places, but the result was always certain. At six in the morning on October 1st Damascus was ours.

Meanwhile the 7th (Meerut) Division had marched



THE STREET WHICH IS
CALLED STRAIGHT

70. 1991
1991/12/15

north along the coast. The population at Tyre and Sidon turned out to welcome them with great enthusiasm. The terror of Turkish misrule had gone like a dreadful dream. On October 8th the force reached Beirut, where it found French warships and a few British light craft had already occupied the port.

The last phase before the Armistice was the occupation of Aleppo, thus making ready to link up with our Mesopotamian forces, now only a few hundred miles away to the east.

Here is an extract from one of General Allenby's despatches, which is most instructive as summing up the military results of the last great push :

" Aleppo is over 300 miles from our former front line. The 5th Cavalry Division covered 500 miles between September 19th and October 26th and captured over 11,000 prisoners and 52 guns. During this period the 5th Cavalry Division lost only 21 per cent. of its horses.

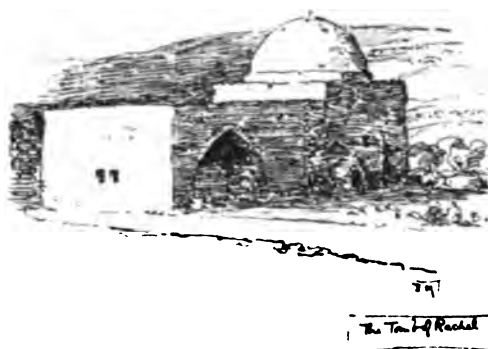
" In the first three phases of the operations material and equipment were hastily abandoned by the enemy in a mountainous area, extending over 2,500 square miles, while in the remaining phases a further advance of over 300 miles has been made. The captures, however, include over 800 machine guns, 210 motor lorries, 44 motor cars, some 3,500 animals, 89 railway engines and 468 carriages and trucks.

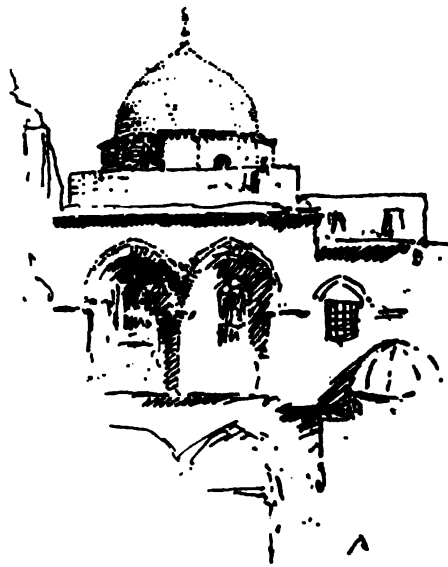
" Of these many are unserviceable, but none have been included that are beyond repair.

" Our ascendancy in the air became so marked towards

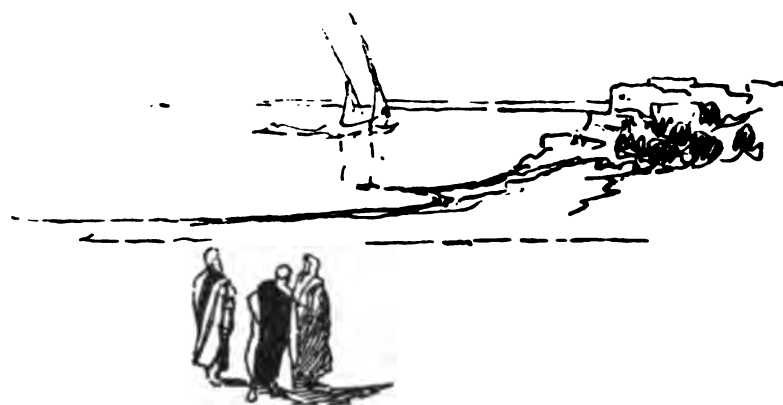
the end of August that only a few of the enemy's aeroplanes were able to fly, with the result that my troops were immune from air attacks during the operations, and the whole strength of the Air Forces could be concentrated on the enemy in his retreat.

" Besides taking an active part in the fighting the Air Forces provided me with full and accurate information as to the enemy's movements."





IN TERRA PAX





The Well of the Magi

XII.—IN TERRA PAX

THE war is over. Christmas is near. The road to Bethlehem is thronged with British troops. Officers and men on leave are up to visit Jerusalem and see the Holy Places for themselves before returning to their homes. British soldiers are guarding the Church of the Nativity, men of Kent and yeomen of East Anglia. Across sun-baked plains by the rivers of Chaldea, wise men, the wise men from the west, are setting out towards their brethren in Syria to bring a highway and a road to make the rough places smooth and to cause the desert to blossom as the rose.

The mighty are fallen. The weapons of war, especially the enemy's derelict motor lorries that strew the roadsides, are perished. Swords are being beaten into ploughshares, and the lion, the British lion in the person of each military governor of the country districts, is lying down with the lamb, the lamb being represented by the poor Syrian peasant fleeced again and again by the ruling Turk.

I rode in the cool of the evening towards the hills of Bethlehem. The region below the Jaffa gate and beneath the walls of Zion had become a choking cloud of dust raised by lorries and wagons. The dim ramparts of the Tower of David, golden in the lengthening light, would have been glorious in a picture wherein one could forget the suffocating realities of the moment. As it was, I was glad to leave the precincts of the walls and watch the slanting sunlight etch lines and patterns into the pleasant fields of Boaz.

Far away to the east the hills of Moab glowed richly like a purple cloud. To the west the sinking sun made chequered patterns through the olives. Ahead, sparkling in the warm glow of evening, lay Bethlehem, clustered upon the hillside like a heap of white stones.

The road dips down and then climbs tortuously among the buildings of the town until it widens to an open space before the Church of the Nativity. Here I talked with British sentries, whose duty it was to keep watch at the entrance to the church and in the chapel within.

Night fell, but the moon shone out on the tree-covered slopes of the hill. Some old men had made a fire among



BETHLEHEM, DEC., 1918

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ADDITIONAL

the olives at the foot of the slope. The sentries that were off duty were sitting with these in the warmth, for by now the air was sharp and chill.

I came upon them suddenly and the scene was so extraordinarily like the traditional scenes of the Nativity, that I made a note of it and have reproduced it here.

We sat talking of the strange chances that had brought us all out to Palestine, and under the spell of the moonlight and with thoughts of home far away we were inclined to be a little sentimental, but like all true Britons covered up our feelings with a veneer of jocularly.

"Makes yer feel like a kind o' coloured supplement don't it," said one, "watchin' our flocks by night, and orl that sort o' thing?"

"Like silver lamps on a distant shrine, the lights of the city shone out," quoted another, aptly enough. He had belonged to a choral society in Camberwell.

"I never thought," the corporal said, "when I heard the missis and the kids a singin' fit to bust about the City o' David that I should ever see it for myself."

"Or be put in a Bible picture," added another in allusion to the fact that I was obviously sketching them for future use.

Then we fell to talking; of home, of the chances of being demobilized, of the future of Palestine. The firelight lit up the gnarled and twisted olives, and cast fitful lights among the fig trees. Above us the walls of Bethlehem and the fortress-like Church of the Nativity stood majestically, far

descried in their moon-lit whiteness. The Syrian peasants "sat simply chatting in a rustic row," their friendship consisting in sharing their fire with us, for we could not understand their speech or know what was passing in their minds. "Perhaps," as Milton puts it, "their loves, or else their sheep, Was all that did their silly thoughts so busy keep," or perhaps they were profound philosophers. We could not tell.

Soon we became a silent company, each one of us left to his own thoughts—thoughts of the past with its tragedy of war, and thoughts of the unwritten future of which perhaps the stars could tell us—"Now while the heaven, by the sun's team untrod, Hath took no print of the approaching light, And all the spangled host keep watching in squadrons bright."

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